DISTANCE LAB

Tools and methods

interreg
Baltic Sea Region
Co-funded by the European Union
Distance LAB

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Introduction

The Distance Lab Toolkit is designed to support remote teams in collaborative innovation, experimentation, and problem-solving—even when participants are distributed across locations. This toolkit provides structured exercises that guide teams through the five key phases of a Distance Lab:

- Exploration
- Ideation
- Prototyping
- Testing
- Sustainability

Unlike traditional innovation workshops, a Distance Lab thrives on **active participation**, continuous engagement, and **community-driven learning**. Success is not just about following the process—**it's about taking ownership**, staying proactive, and committing to long-term collaboration.

Use this toolkit to facilitate, document, and refine your innovation process, ensuring that even in a remote environment, you can generate, test, and scale impactful solutions.

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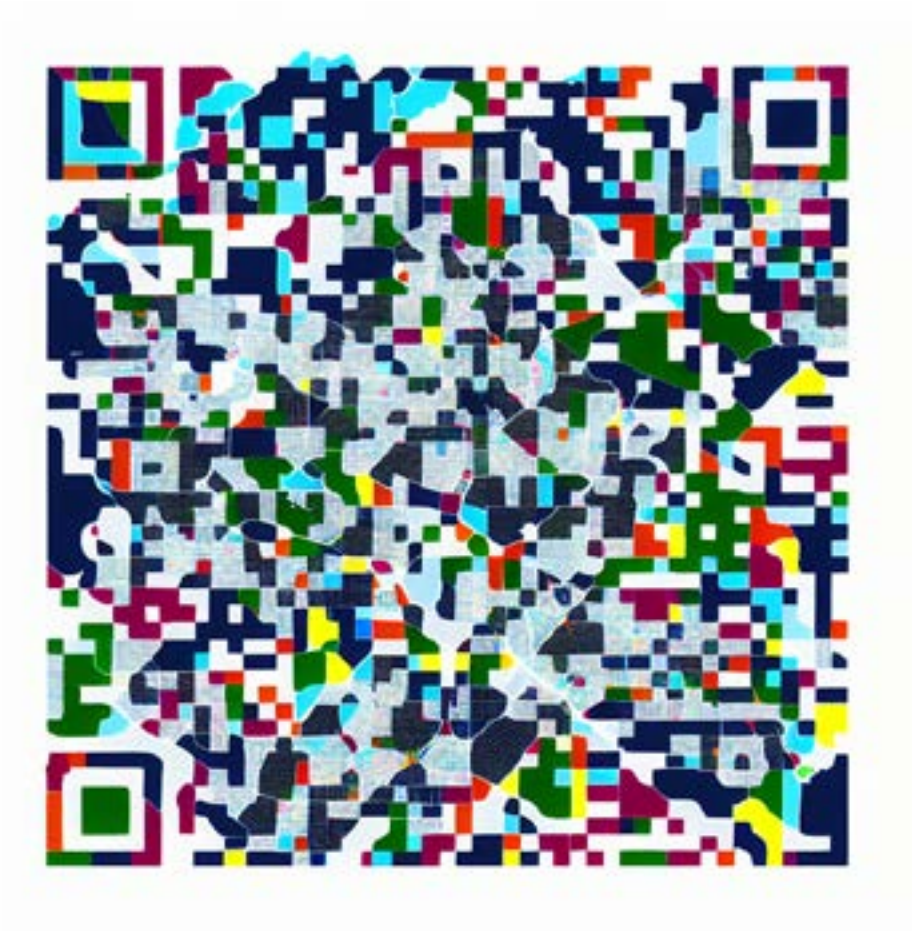

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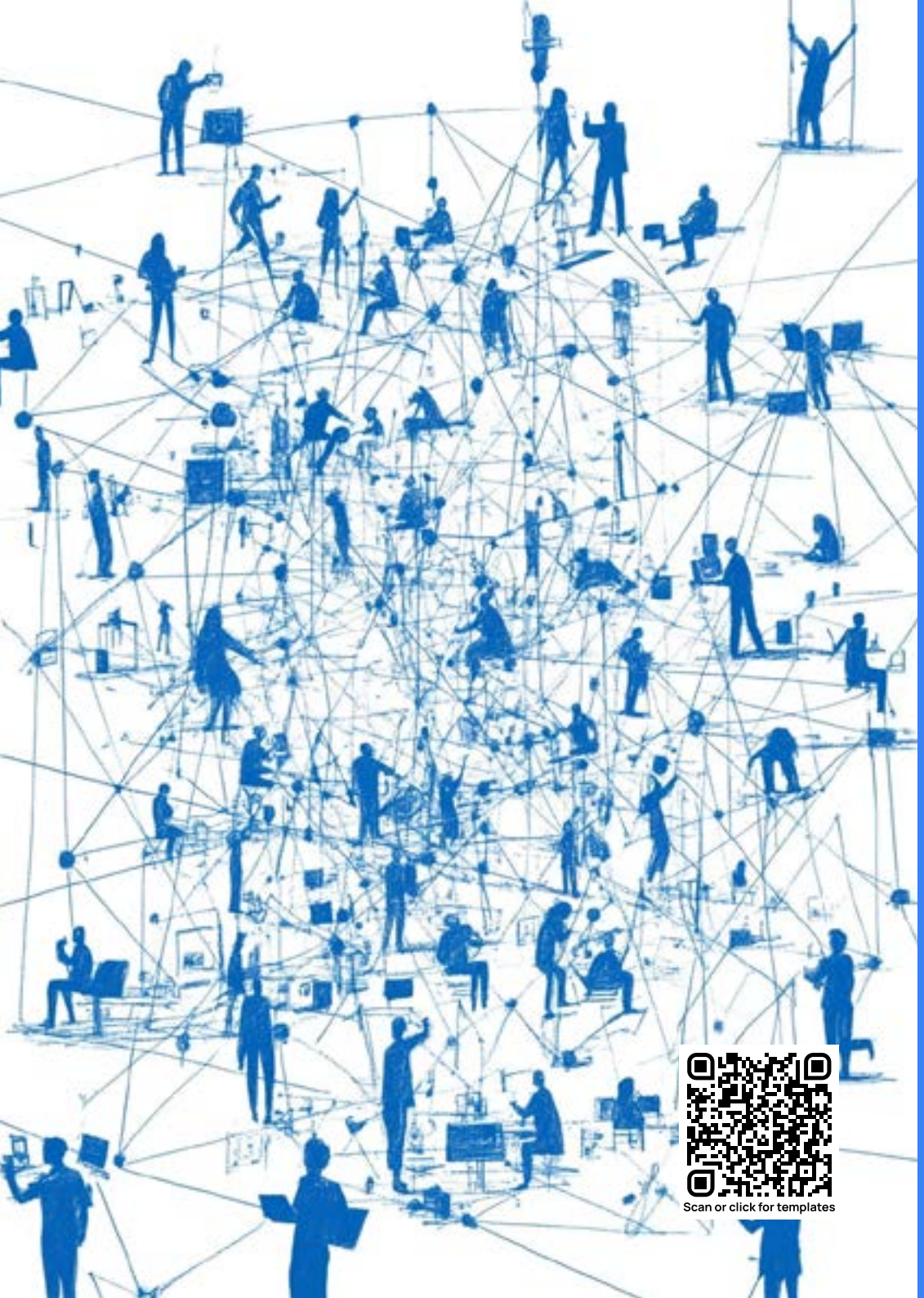
Exploration Phase:
Establishing a Shared Understanding in a Remote Context

Distance Labs are built on collaboration, and in a remote setting, gaining a **shared understanding of the problem** space is more important than ever. Without casual office interactions or direct fieldwork, we must be deliberate in our approach to mapping stakeholders, understanding users, and defining challenges.

This phase is not about assuming or guessing—**it's about proactively engaging with the ecosystem**, reaching out to key actors, and building a collective picture of the context we are working in. It requires a curious mindset, openness to different perspectives, and a willingness to challenge assumptions.

By leveraging digital collaboration tools, remote interviews, and **co-creation methods**, teams ensure that distance is not a barrier but a strength—allowing for broader participation and deeper insights. Your engagement here will **set the foundation for everything that follows**. Take initiative, seek clarity, and ensure everyone is aligned on the problem before rushing to solutions.

Attitude to Adopt:
Be curious, inclusive, and proactive—don't wait for insights to come to you, go find them!



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EX-01

Stakeholder Mapping

Identify and map stakeholders to understand their roles, relationships, and influence in a given project or system. This exercise helps teams visualize key actors, uncover gaps, and strategize engagement efforts to ensure effective collaboration.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Scope** – Project, service, or process.

2: **Brainstorm Stakeholders** – List all relevant people, groups, and organizations.

3: **Categorize Stakeholders** – Group them into primary (direct), secondary (indirect), and external (regulators, influencers).

4: **Map Relationships** – Use Miro or whiteboard tools to connect stakeholders based on influence and interactions.

5: **Assess Influence & Interest** – Rank each stakeholder based on their impact on the project and their level of interest.

6: **Discuss Engagement Strategies** – Plan communication and involvement strategies for each stakeholder type.

7: **Review & Validate** – Ensure the map is complete and reflects reality.

Outcome

A structured stakeholder map outlining key players, their influence levels, and engagement strategies.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Lucidspark, or google slide template.

Tools for offline setup:
Whiteboard, Sticky Notes

Expert tip

Don't overlook informal influencers—sometimes, people without formal authority shape decisions more than leaders.

Scan or click for templates

EX-02

Empathy Mapping

Understand user needs, thoughts, and behaviors to build deeper empathy for designing user-centered solutions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Identify the User Persona –** Select a real or hypothetical user.

2: **Set Up the Empathy Map –** Divide the board into four quadrants: See, Think, Feel, Do.

3: **Gather User Insights –** Collect data from interviews, research, or surveys.

4: **Fill in the 'See' Quadrant –** Identify external factors influencing the user.

5: **Complete the 'Think' Quadrant –** Document what the user considers when making decisions.

6: **Analyze the 'Feel' Quadrant –** Capture emotional triggers and frustrations.

7: **Outline the 'Do' Quadrant –** Identify the user's actions and behaviors.

8: **Refine & Validate –** Discuss takeaways, update the map.

Outcome

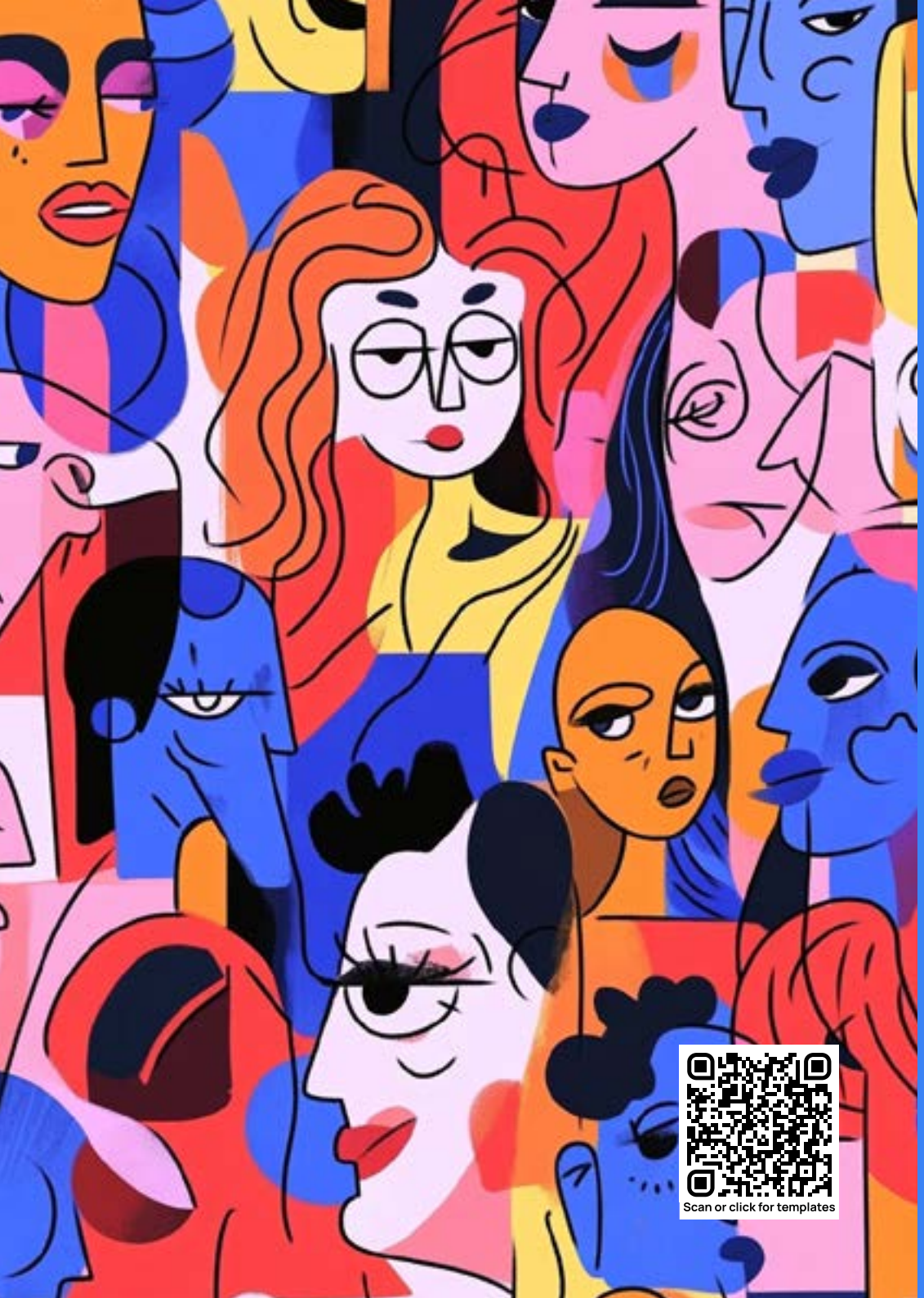
A completed empathy map providing deep insights into the user's mindset, guiding better design decisions.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Google Slide template

Tools for offline setup:
Paper Templates, Markers

Expert tip

Use actual user quotes and observations rather than assumptions for authenticity, as well as deeper tinsights.



Personas

Develop user archetypes that represent key audience segments, ensuring products align with real user needs.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Collect User Data** – Conduct user interviews, surveys, and analytics.

2: **Identify Common Patterns** – Group users based on shared behaviors.

3: **Define Persona Profiles** – Include demographics, goals, pain points, and motivations.

4: **Incorporate Quotes & Stories** – Add direct user statements to humanize personas.

5: **Adapt or esign the Persona Template** – Use structured formats in Miro, Canva, or printed templates.

6: **Validate with Stakeholders** – Ensure personas align with actual user insights.

7: **Iterate Based on Feedback** – Keep personas updated as user behaviors evolve.

Outcome

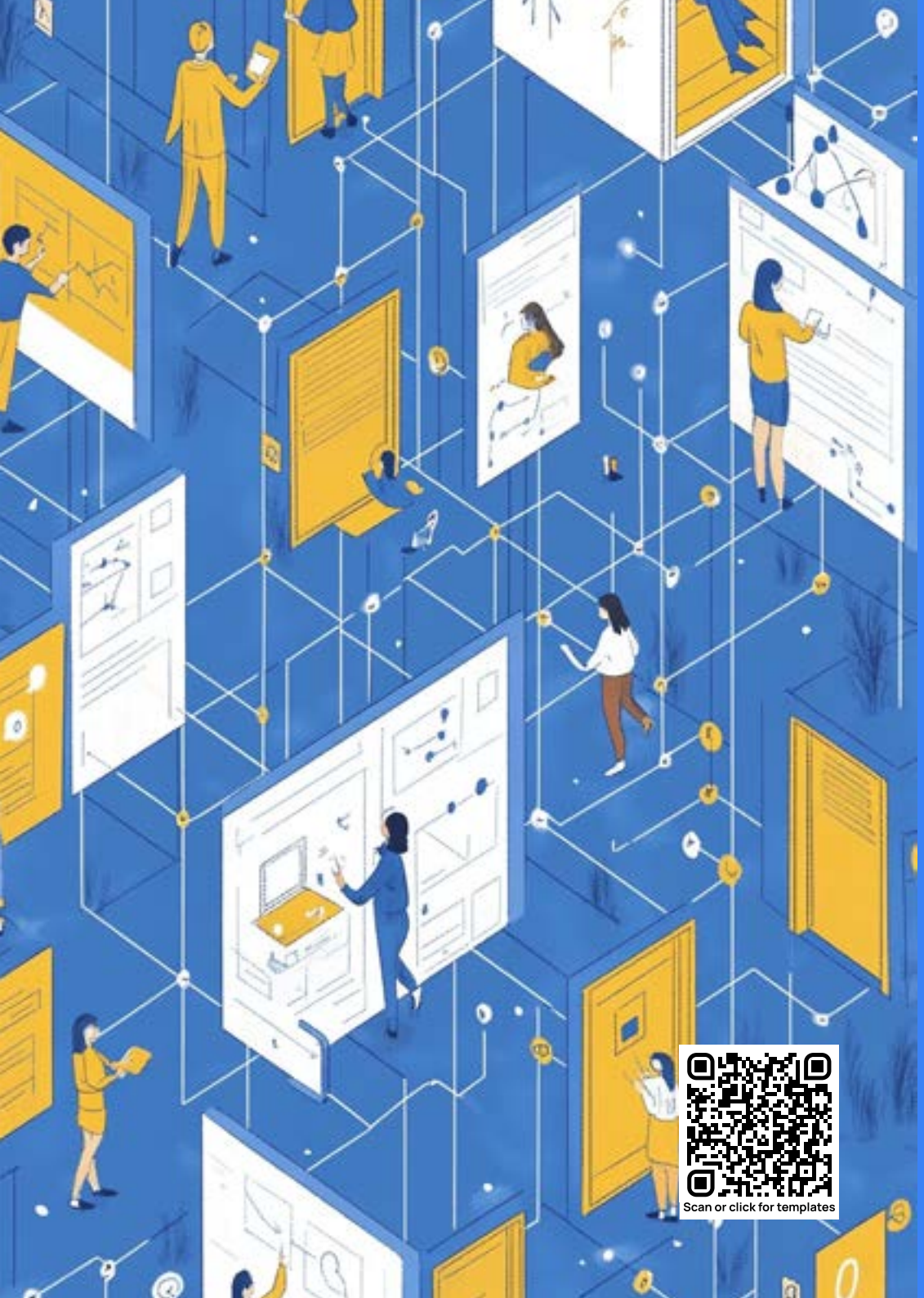
A set of well-defined personas that teams can reference throughout the project.

Tools for online setup:
Canva, Miro, Google slide template

Tools for offline setup:
Printed Persona Templates

Expert tip

Personas should be grounded in research, not assumptions, and regularly reviewed as the project changes and evolves.



EX-04

Journey Mapping

Map user journeys to identify pain points, opportunities, and key moments that influence user experience.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Identify the User and Scenario** – Define a specific user journey to map.

1: **List Key Stages** – Break down the user's experience into key steps.

1: **Document User Actions and Emotions** – Capture what users do, think, and feel at each stage.

1: **Identify Pain Points and Opportunities** – Highlight moments of friction or success.

1: **Visualize the Journey** – Use a template or whiteboard to map the flow.

1: **Review and Optimize** – Iterate the journey map based on team discussions.

Outcome

A journey map that highlights user pain points and areas for improvement.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Lucidchart, Google slide template

Tools for offline setup:
Sticky Notes, Posters

Expert tip

Look for emotional highs and lows in the journey to identify impactful improvements.

Scan or click for templates

EX-05

Value Mapping

Align stakeholder values and goals to create a shared understanding and prioritize actions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Identify Stakeholder Groups** Define who is involved in decision-making.

2: **List Individual Values** – For Each decsion maker the participants note their priorities and values.

3: **Find Commonalities** – Group overlapping values and identify shared goals.

4: **Highlight Conflicts** – Address areas where values differ significantly.

5: **Align on Priorities** – Develop a set of agreed-upon core values for the project.

Outcome

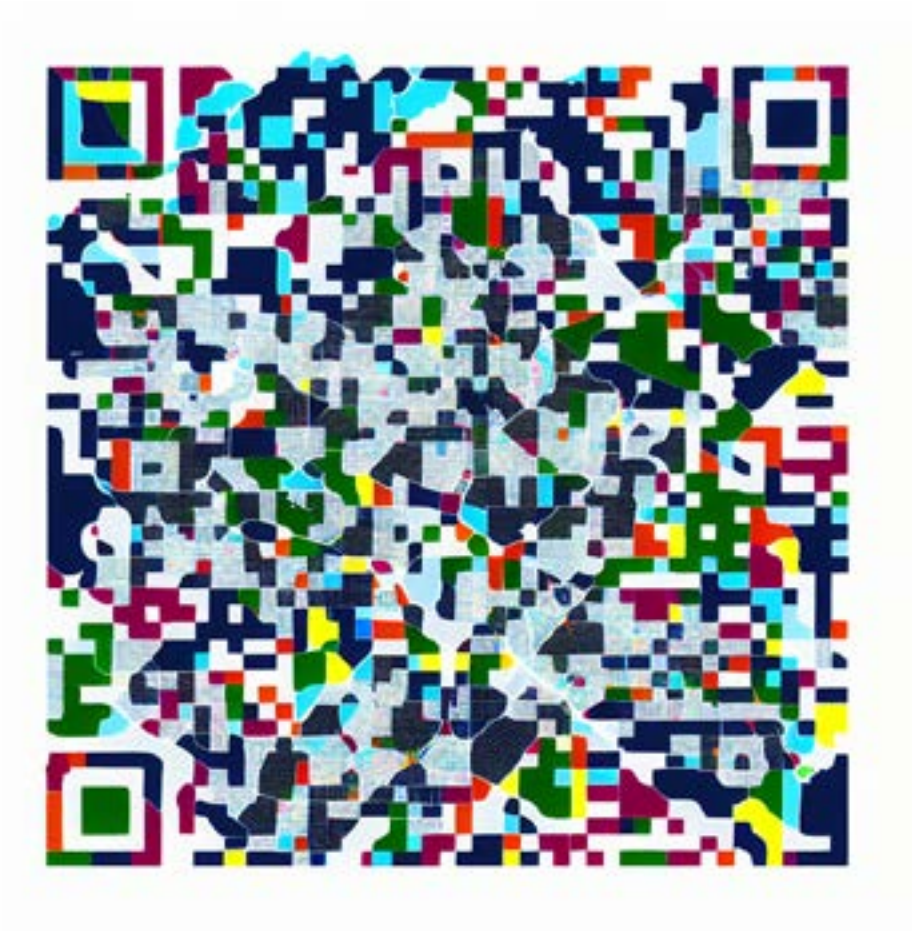
A documented value map ensuring alignment across teams and stakeholders.

Tools for online setup:
Google Docs, Miro, google slide template

Tools for offline setup:
Large Paper Sheets, Markers

Expert tip

Encourage transparency and active listening to resolve value conflicts effectively.



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Ideation Phase:
Co-Creating Solutions in a Remote-First World

Creativity does not happen in isolation, and in a remote setting, **active participation is key.** Distance Labs operate under the principle that everyone is a designer, and great ideas come from collective intelligence.

This phase is about balancing individual ideation with collaborative refinement. While some exercises focus on silent idea generation (like Brainwriting), others rely on real-time discussions and structured feedback (such as Dot Voting or Thinking Hats). The key is to **stay engaged, present, and ready to contribute**—even when working asynchronously.

A passive approach will not work here. The more you put in, the more you and the community will get out of it. Distance Labs thrive on energy, commitment, and a willingness to build on each other's ideas. Be open, **challenge respectfully**, and push ideas further rather than shutting them down too early.

Attitude to Adopt:
Be bold, constructive, and engaged—don't hold back your ideas, but also help others refine theirs.

ID-01

Crazy 8s

Generate rapid ideas in a structured brainstorming process to push creativity.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Prepare Materials** – Distribute paper or open a shared digital sketching space.

2: **Divide the Page into 8 Sections** – Each participant should have 8 boxes.

3: **Set a Timer for 8 Minutes** – Participants sketch one idea per minute.

4: **Encourage Quantity Over Quality** – Avoid self-editing or filtering ideas.

5: **Review & Select Best Ideas** – Participants highlight their strongest concepts.

6: **Discuss & Refine** – Share ideas and explore possible improvements.

Outcome

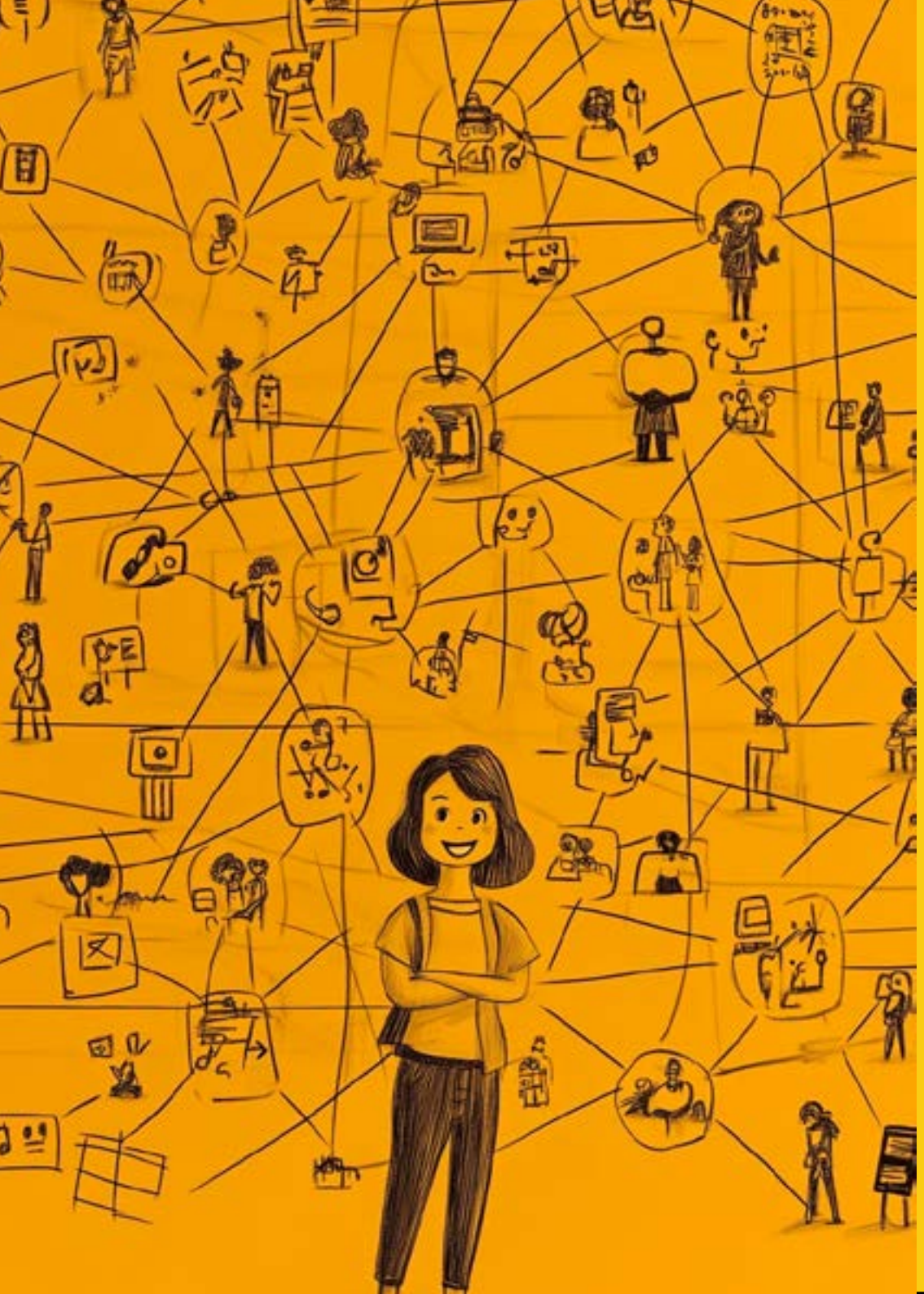
A collection of diverse, quick ideas that can be refined into actionable solutions.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Sketching Tools (showing it on camera or uploading picture)

Tools for offline setup:
A4 Paper, Pens

Expert tip

The first ideas tend to be obvious—real innovation happens in the later sketches.



ID-02

Brainwriting

Encourage idea generation in a silent, focused way, allowing all participants to contribute equally.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Distribute Brainwriting Templates** – Each participant gets a structured sheet for ideas.

2: **Set a Timer** – Give 5-10 minutes to write down as many ideas as possible.

3: **Pass Sheets to Another Participant** – They build on or modify previous ideas.

4: **Repeat for 3-4 Rounds** – Each idea gets multiple perspectives.

5: **Review & Discuss** – Identify the most promising ideas.

Outcome

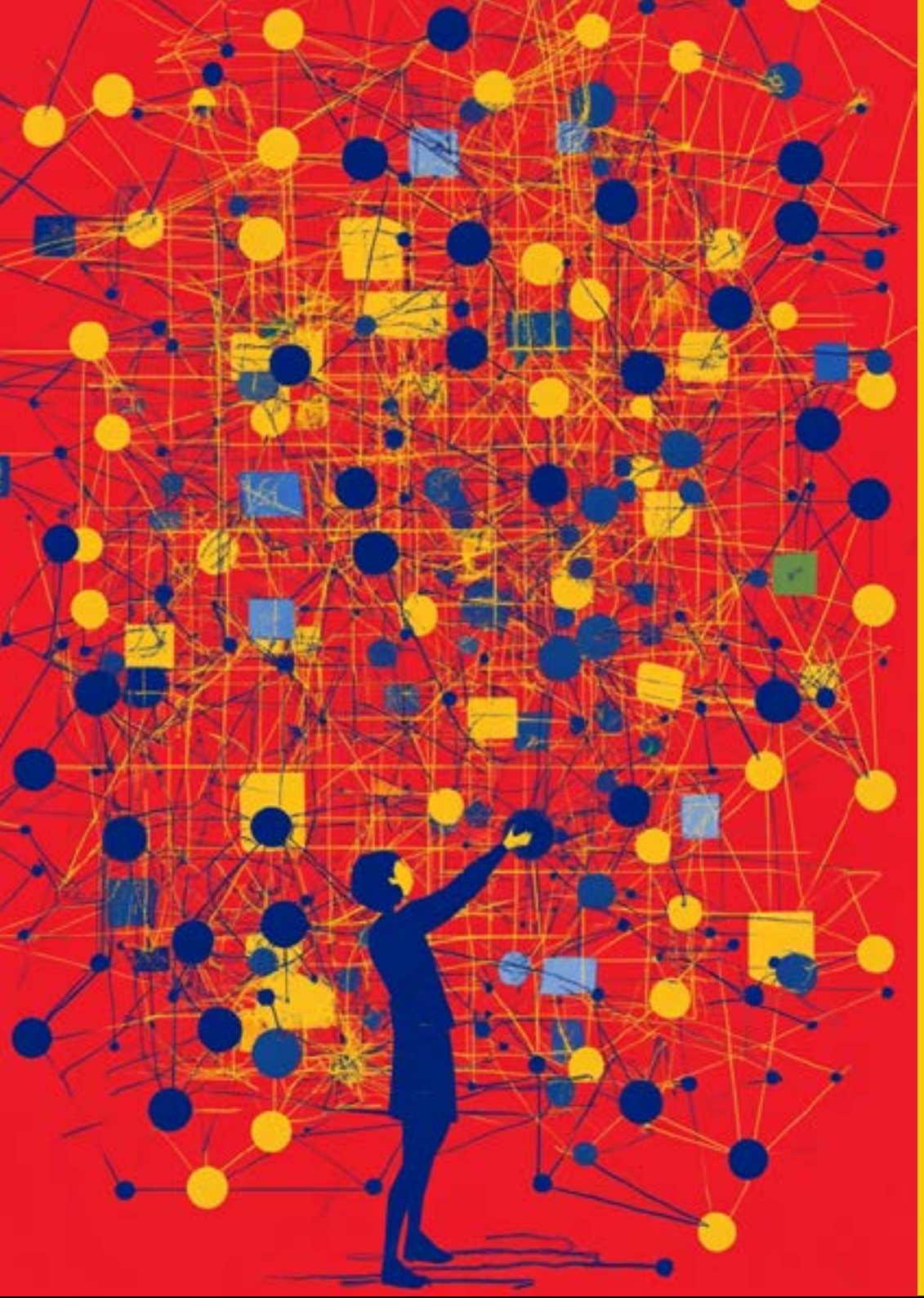
A pool of collaboratively developed ideas refined through multiple perspectives.

Tools for online setup:
Google Docs, Miro

Tools for offline setup:
Index Cards, Markers

Expert tip

This method works well for introverts who may not speak up in traditional brainstorming sessions.



ID-03

Dot Voting

Prioritize ideas democratically by allowing participants to vote on the most promising solutions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Display All Ideas** – Write down ideas on a board or digital workspace.

2: **Distribute Voting Dots** – Each participant receives a set number of votes.

3: **Place Votes** – Participants vote on their preferred ideas using dots or marks.

4: **Rank and Analyze Results** – Identify the most popular ideas for development.

5: **Discuss and Move Forward** – Develop the top-ranked ideas further.

Outcome

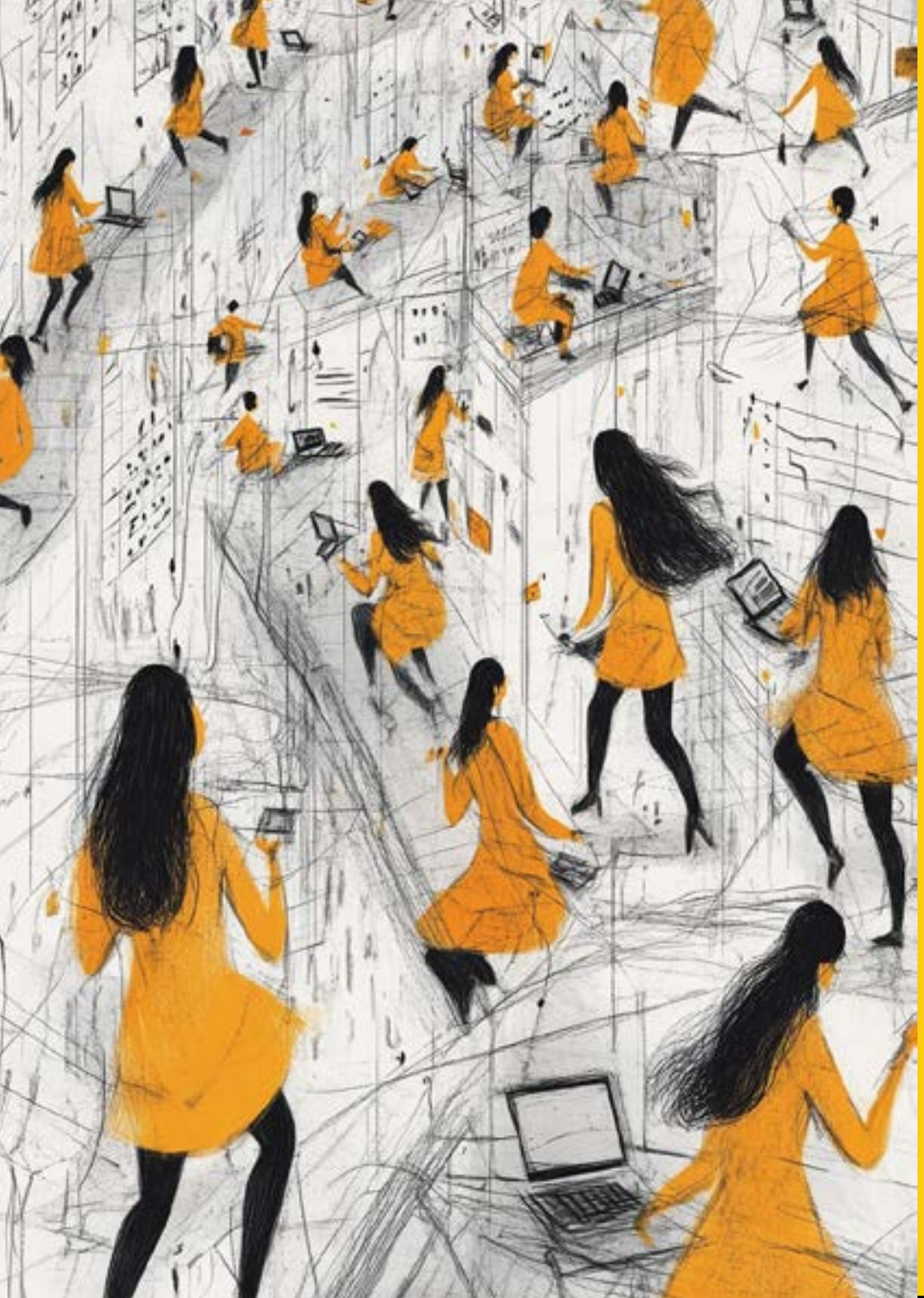
A prioritized list of ideas based on collective input.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Dot Voting Tools

Tools for offline setup:
Sticky Notes, Dot Stickers

Expert tip

Allow participants to vote on multiple ideas to get a balanced prioritization.



ID-04

Fast Idea Generator

Push creative boundaries by reframing problems and exploring unconventional solutions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Introduce a Problem Statement** – Clearly define the issue to address.

2: **Use Idea Prompts** – Ask "what if" questions to shift perspectives.

3: **Encourage Rapid Brainstorming** – Generate multiple ideas within a short timeframe.

4: **Group and Expand on Ideas** – Combine, refine, or build upon existing ideas.

5: **Select the Most Promising Ideas** – Identify feasible and innovative concepts for development.

Outcome

A set of unconventional ideas that challenge assumptions and inspire innovation.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Jamboard, Google slide template

Tools for offline setup:
Flashcards, Sticky Notes

Expert tip

Encourage participants to embrace wild and unrealistic ideas—they can lead to breakthrough innovations.

ID-05

Thinking Hats

Encourage diverse viewpoints by having participants adopt different perspectives (logical, emotional, creative, etc.).

Step by step Instructions

1: **Introduce the Thinking Hats Method** – Explain the six different perspectives (e.g., logic, emotion, creativity, fear, business, as Newton, ...).

2: **Assign Hats to Participants** – Each person takes on a specific perspective.

3: **Analyze the Problem** – Discuss the challenge from each assigned viewpoint.

4: **Summarize Insights** – Collect key takeaways from each perspective.

5: **Use Insights to Inform Decision-Making** – Apply the different viewpoints to refine solutions.

Outcome

A well-rounded analysis covering multiple perspectives.

Tools for online setup:
Breakout Rooms, Role Play Scenarios

Tools for offline setup:
Role Play Cards

Expert tip

Encourage participants to fully immerse themselves in their assigned perspectives for authentic insights.

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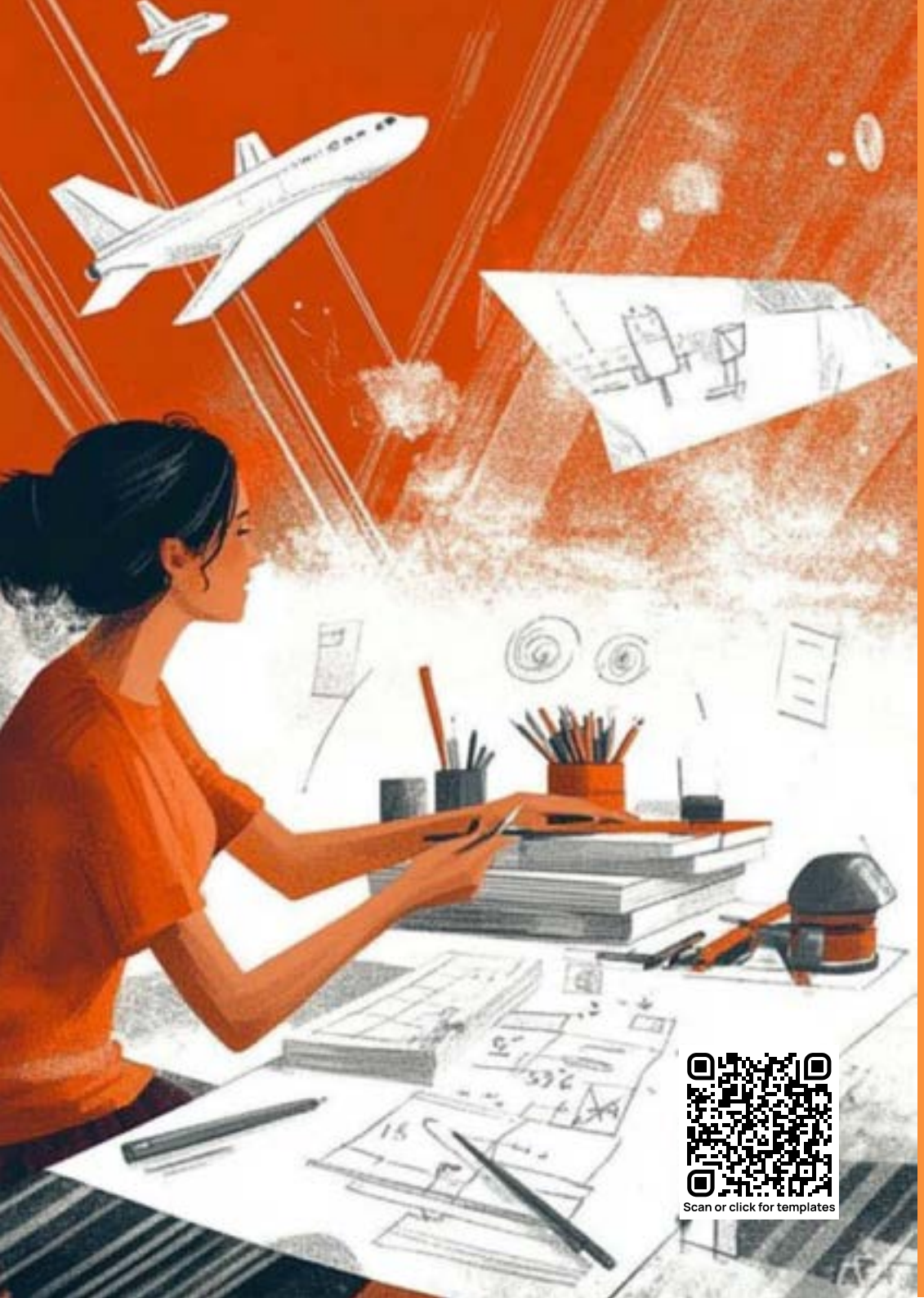
Prototyping Phase:
Building Tangible Experiences in a Digital Space

In Distance Labs, prototyping **is not about creating perfect solutions**—it's about learning fast, failing quickly, and refining ideas through real-world interactions. Even in a remote setting, it is essential to **make ideas tangible** so they can be tested, discussed, and improved.

Prototyping at a distance requires a creative and adaptive mindset. Instead of relying solely on traditional product mockups, teams simulate experiences, role-play interactions, and test workflows using digital tools. **You don't need expensive software—simple sketches, interactive documents, and structured storytelling can bring ideas to life effectively.**

Most importantly, prototyping should be a community effort. It is not something you do alone—it requires input from users, feedback from peers, and **iteration based on insights**. Engage actively, build on feedback, and embrace an experimental mindset.

Attitude to Adopt:
Be adaptive, hands-on, and iterative—your first version will not be perfect, but every version will be better than the last.



Collaborative Storyboarding

Develop visual representations of ideas or processes through sequential storytelling. This helps teams communicate concepts clearly and refine workflows.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Concept** – Identify the story or process you want to visualize.

2: **Set Up the Storyboard Framework** – Use a blank grid or digital storyboard tool.

3: **Break Down the Story into Scenes** – Outline key events or interactions.

4: **Sketch the Storyboard** – Use quick drawings or simple visuals to depict each step.

5: **Add Descriptions** – Provide short explanations under each frame.

6: **Review with the Team** – Ensure logical flow and identify missing elements.

7: **Iterate & Improve** – Adjust based on feedback and refine the story.

Outcome

A structured storyboard that visually communicates a user journey, service, or process.

Tools for online setup:
Storyboard That, Figma, Miro, Google slides

Tools for offline setup:
Storyboarding Sheets, Markers

Expert tip

Focus on user emotions and touchpoints in each scene to enhance engagement.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

Use LEGO as a hands-on tool to explore complex ideas and encourage collaborative problem-solving in a tangible way.

Step by step Instructions

1: Distribute LEGO Kits – Provide participants with an assortment of LEGO bricks.

2: Define the Challenge – Frame a question or problem for participants to solve.

3: Build Representations – Each person creates a model representing their ideas.

4: Explain the Models – Participants share their models and insights with the group.

5: Discuss & Reflect – Analyze patterns and common themes.

6: Combine Ideas – Merge elements from multiple models to create holistic solutions.

7: Refine & Document – Take photos and summarize key findings.

Outcome

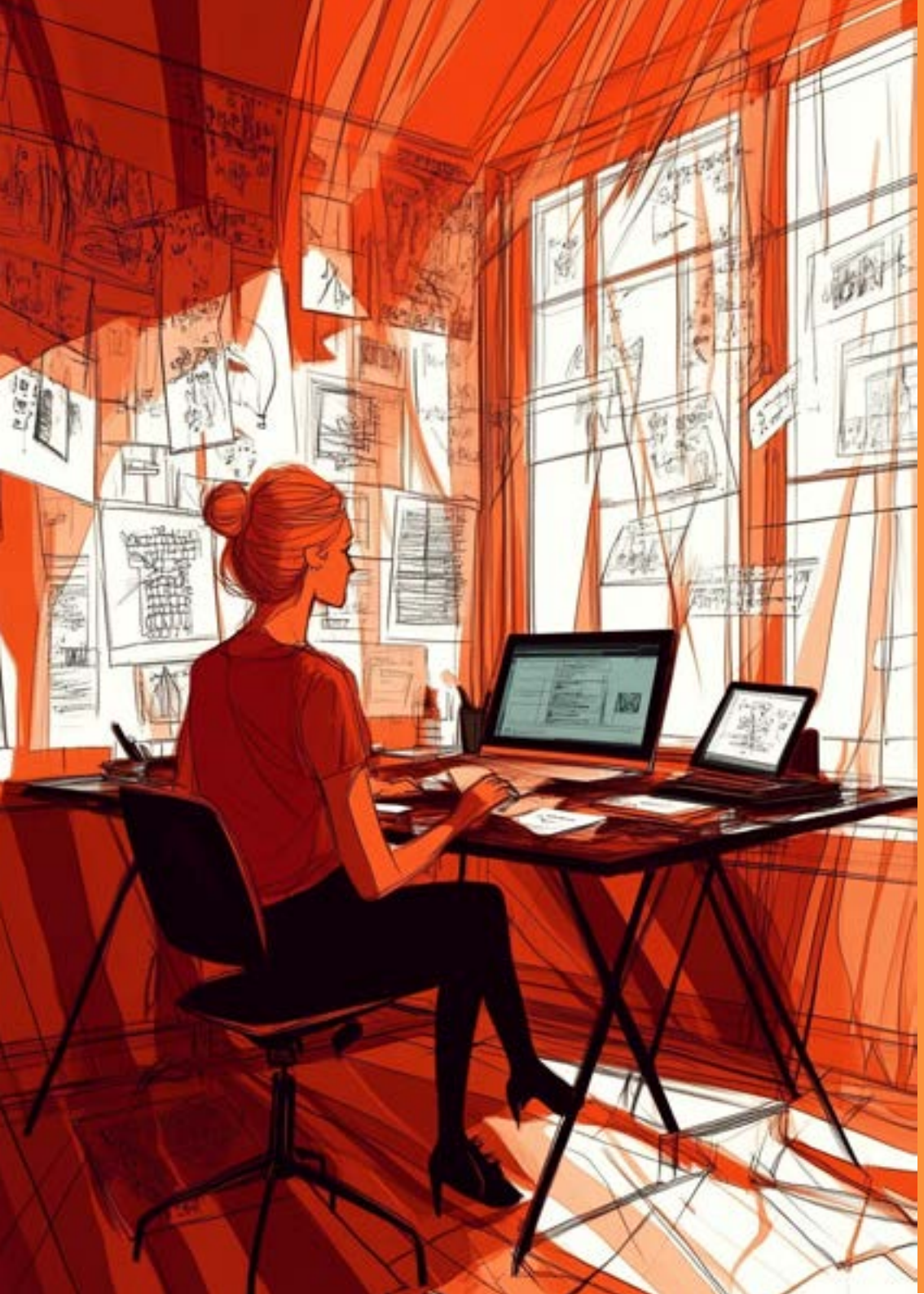
A physical representation of abstract ideas that enhances discussion and alignment.

Tools for online setup:
Bricklink studio (stud.io), Miro (for documentation)

Tools for offline setup:
LEGO Kits

Expert tip

Encourage metaphorical thinking—models don't need to be literal but should convey deeper meaning.
More time needed if online.



Rapid Prototyping

Quickly build and test low-fidelity prototypes to gather early user feedback.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Core Concept** – Identify what needs to be tested.

2: **Select a Prototyping Method** – Choose from sketches, wireframes, or paper models.

3: **Create the Prototype** – Build a simple version that users can interact with.

4: **Conduct Initial User Testing** – Gather feedback on usability and clarity.

5: **Refine the Prototype** – Iterate based on feedback before moving to high-fidelity versions.

Outcome

A functional prototype that allows for early-stage validation.

Tools for online setup:
Figma, Google Slides

Tools for offline setup:
Paper, Cardboard, Scissors, Markers, ...

Expert tip

Low-fidelity prototypes are meant to be disposable—don't overinvest time in perfection.

Role-Playing

Simulate real-world scenarios to test solutions and understand user behaviors in different contexts. This method helps uncover usability challenges and refine service interactions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Scenario** – Identify the situation you want to simulate (e.g., customer support call, product purchase, service use).

2: **Assign Roles** – Participants take on different user or stakeholder roles.

3: **Establish the Setting** – Define the scenario's context and goals.

4: **Act Out the Scenario** – Participants interact as they would in the real world.

5: **Observe and Document Insights** – Take notes on user behavior, pain points, and decision-making.

6: **Debrief and Reflect** – Discuss what worked well and what needs improvement.

7: **Adjust the Design** – Use insights to refine the service or product being tested.

Outcome

A deeper understanding of how users interact with a system, leading to better usability and experience design.

Tools for online setup:
Zoom, Google Docs (for role scripts)

Tools for offline setup:
Props, Costumes, Scenario Cards

Expert tip

Encourage participants to immerse themselves in their roles for authentic insights.

Wizard of Oz Prototyping

Test incomplete systems by manually simulating key interactions before full development. This method allows teams to validate assumptions without building a fully functional product.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Create a Fake System** – Set up a prototype that appears functional to users but is actually controlled by a facilitator.

2: **Recruit Test Participants** – Have real users interact with the system.

3: **Manually Perform System Actions** – Simulate responses as if the system were automated.

4: **Observe User Reactions** – Take notes on usability, engagement, and pain points.

5: **Collect Feedback** – Ask users about their experience and expectations.

6: **Evaluate the Need for Automation** – Determine if a full system build is justified based on insights.

Outcome

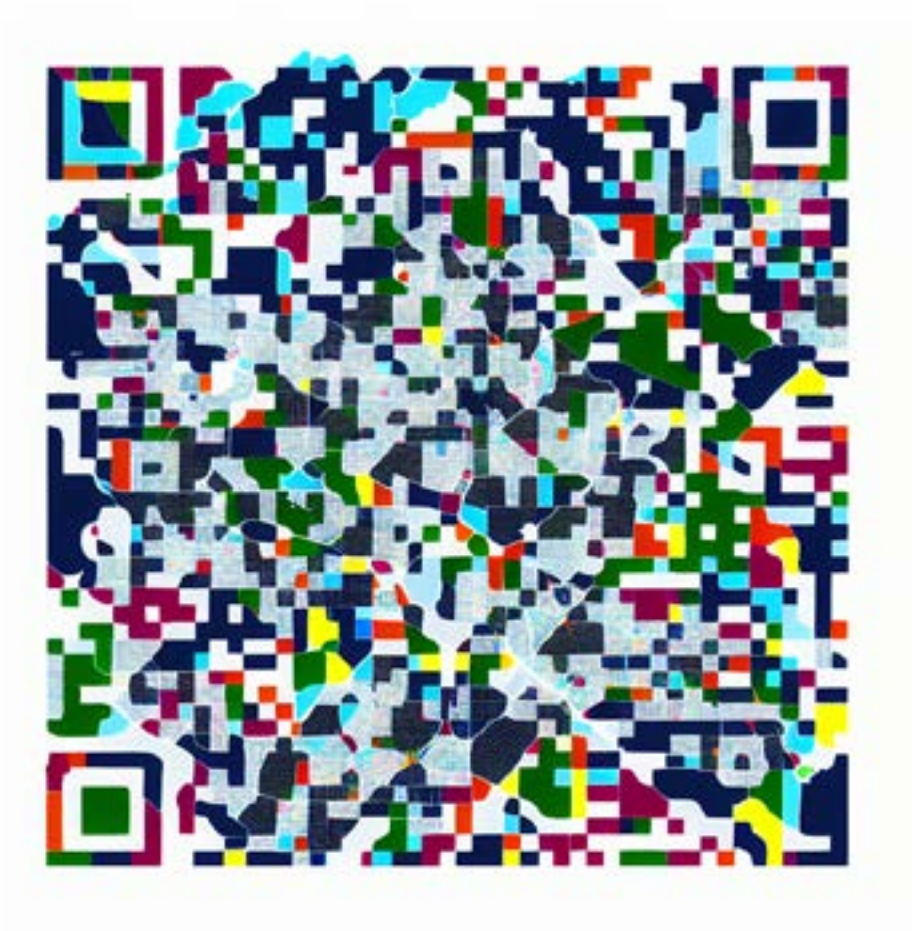
A validated concept that helps teams decide whether to invest in automation.

Tools for online setup:
Typeform (to simulate AI interactions), Google slides, Google Sheets

Tools for offline setup:
Mock Screens, Paper Prototypes, Interaction prototypes

Expert tip

Users should not know the system is manually operated—it ensures natural interactions.



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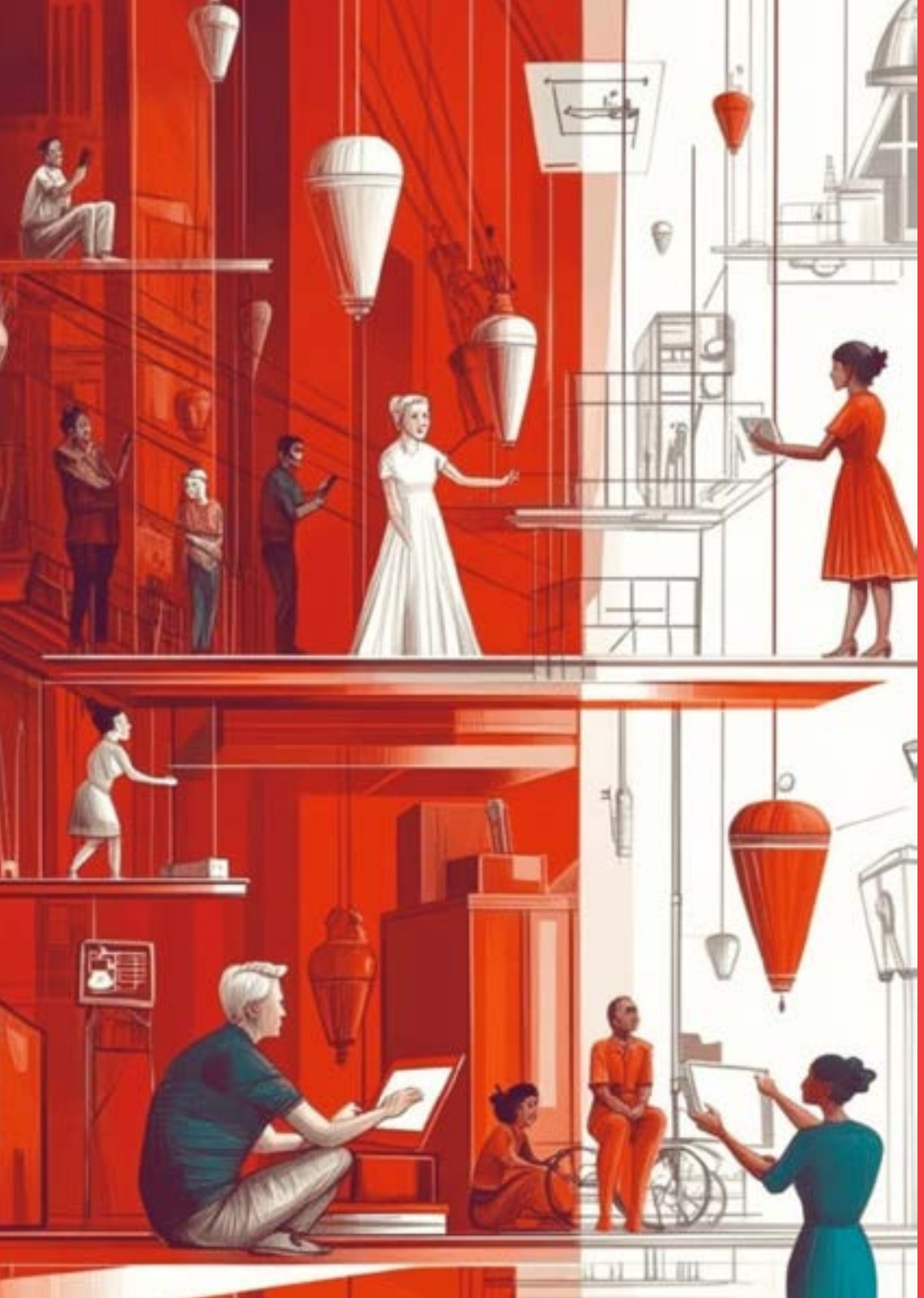
Testing Phase:
Gathering Real Insights & Refining with the Community

Distance Labs operate under a key principle: **No idea survives first contact** with reality unchanged. Testing is not about proving that an idea is right—**it's about learning what works, what doesn't, and how to improve it**.

In remote settings, engagement with users must be intentional. You won't get spontaneous feedback, so it is your responsibility to reach out, **ask the right questions, and structure feedback loops**. Testing methods like remote usability tests, A/B testing, and structured feedback ladders allow you to validate ideas even when participants are scattered across different locations.

The biggest mistake is waiting too long to test. Engage with real users as early as possible and treat them as co-creators, not just test subjects. Listen to their feedback, don't get defensive, and use every insight to refine the solution further.

Attitude to Adopt:
Be open, humble, and systematic—testing is about learning, not about defending your work.



Usability Testing

Assess the usability of a product or service by observing real users interacting with it, identifying pain points and areas for improvement.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define Test Objectives** – Identify what aspects of usability you want to evaluate.

2: **Recruit Participants** – Select real users who match your target audience.

3: **Prepare Test Scenarios** – Create realistic tasks for participants to complete.

4: **Conduct the Test** – Observe users as they interact with the product.

5: **Collect Feedback** – Document challenges, frustrations, and successes.

6: **Analyze Findings** – Identify trends and recurring usability issues.

7: **Prioritize Fixes** – Develop a roadmap for improving usability based on insights.

Outcome

A usability report highlighting friction points and user needs.

Tools for online setup:
Maze, Lookback, Google slides

Tools for offline setup:
Printed Screens, Notepads

Expert tip

Record sessions (with permission) for deeper analysis and validation.

A/B Testing

Compare two different design or feature variations to determine which one performs better.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Hypothesis** – Identify what aspect of the design you are testing.

2: **Create Two Variations** – Develop version A and version B with a single clear difference.

3: **Split Users Randomly** – Assign participants to either version A or B.

4: **Measure Key Metrics** – Track engagement, conversions, or other performance indicators.

5: **Analyze and Choose the Best Version** – Implement the winning design.

Outcome

Data-backed insights on which design choice is more effective.

Tools for online setup:
Gogle Optimize, SurveyMonkey

Tools for offline setup:
Printed Comparison Sheets

Expert tip

Test only one variable at a time for clear results.

Feedback Ladder

Collect structured feedback using a ladder approach: Likes, Questions, and Suggestions. This ensures actionable insights for continuous improvement.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Set Up a Feedback Board** – Divide it into three sections: Likes, Questions, and Suggestions.

2: **Introduce the Feedback Process** – Explain the purpose of each section.

3: **Gather User Feedback** – Participants write down what they liked, what they are unsure about, and what they suggest improving.

4: **Organize by Theme** – Cluster similar feedback items.

5: **Prioritize Key Insights** – Identify which feedback points need immediate action.

6: **Develop an Action Plan** – Define how improvements will be implemented.

Outcome

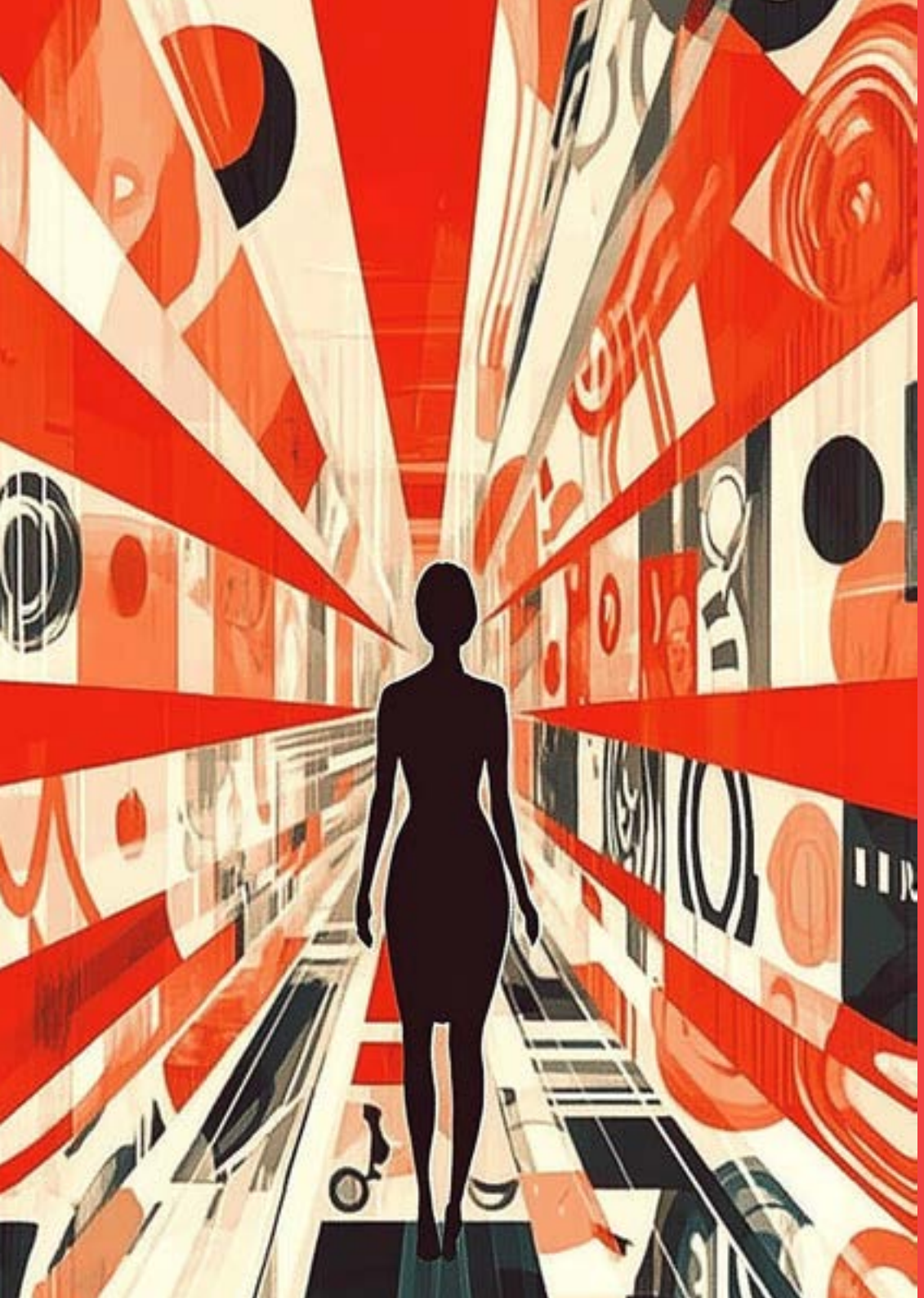
A well-structured feedback repository guiding iterative refinements.

Tools for online setup:
Google Sheets, Miro

Tools for offline setup:
Pre-Printed Feedback Forms

Expert tip

Encourage constructive criticism—negative feedback leads to meaningful improvements.



Shadowing

Observe users in their natural environment to uncover insights that may not emerge in interviews.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Select a User to Observe** – Choose someone representative of your target audience.

2: **Set Up Observation Conditions** – Define what behaviors you're monitoring.

3: **Minimize Interference** – Avoid leading users or influencing their actions.

4: **Record Key Observations** – Take notes on pain points and unexpected behaviors.

5: **Analyze & Discuss Findings** – Identify usability challenges and opportunities.

Outcome

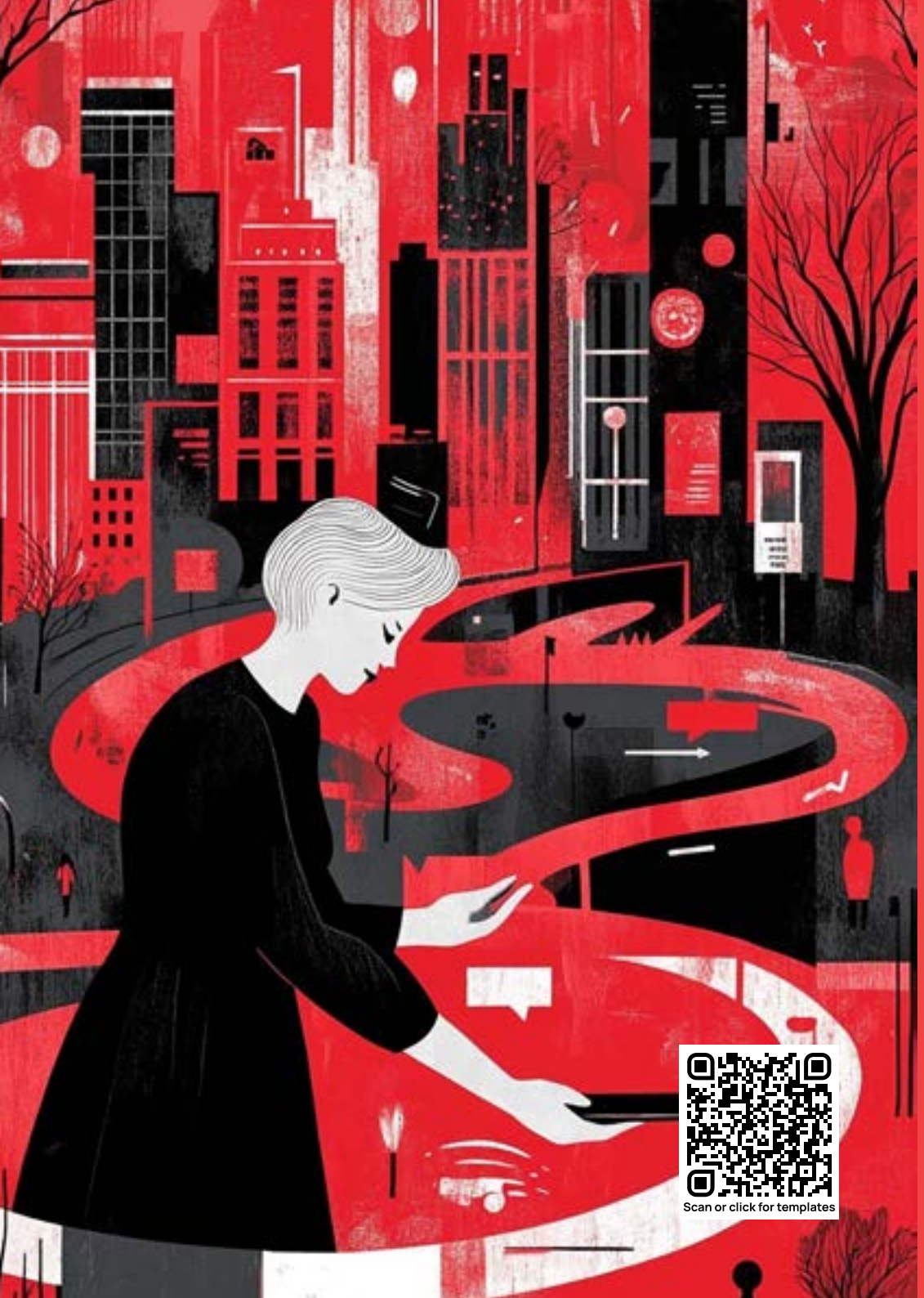
A deep understanding of user behaviors and interactions in real-world settings.

Tools for online setup:
Screen Recording Tools, go-pro sent to tester

Tools for offline setup:
Observation Notebooks

Expert tip

Be as unobtrusive as possible—users behave more naturally when they forget they are being observed.



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Experience Map

Visualize user interactions across a service or product to identify pain points, opportunities, and areas for enhancement.

Step by step Instructions

1: Define the Scope – Choose a process or journey to map (e.g., customer onboarding, product purchase).

2: Identify Key Touchpoints – Break down the journey into sequential steps.

3: Document User Actions & Emotions – Capture what users do, think, and feel at each stage.

4: Highlight Pain Points – Identify where users struggle or face frustration.

5: Map Opportunities for Improvement – Find moments where the experience can be enhanced.

6: Refine the Map Based on Feedback – Validate findings with real users and adjust accordingly.

Outcome

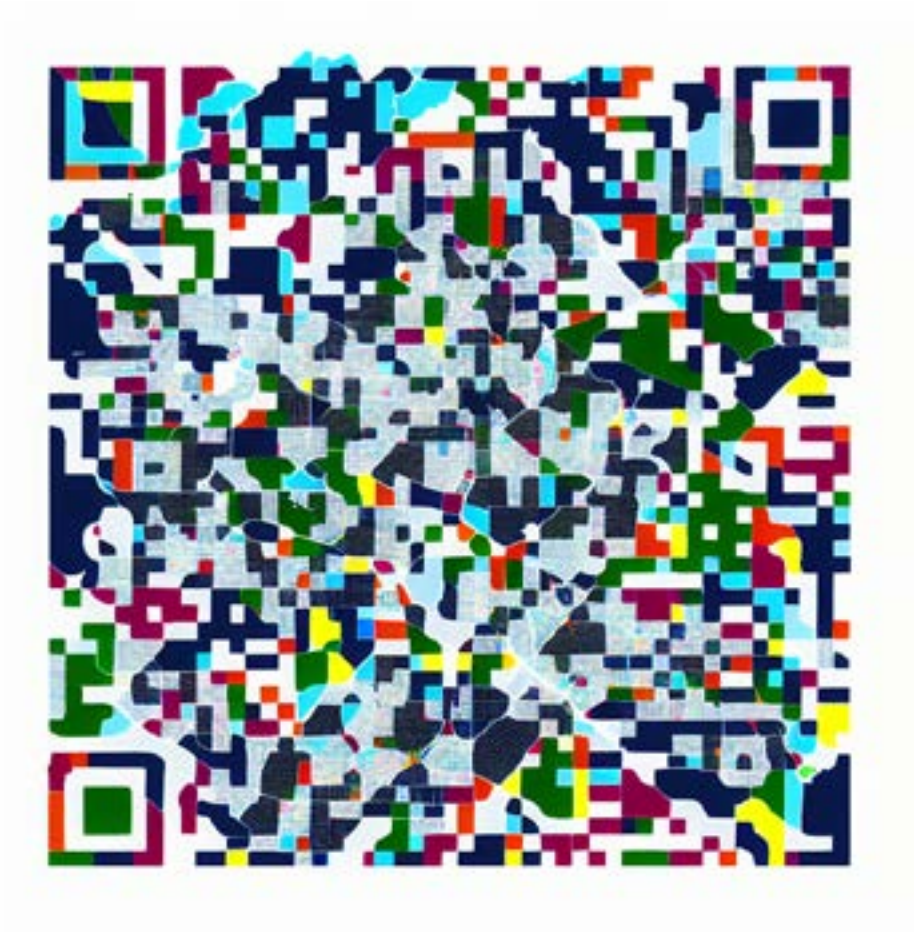
A high-level map of the full user experience, revealing areas for targeted improvements.

Tools for online setup:
Lucidchart, Miro, Google slides, Google sheets

Tools for offline setup:
Experience Map Posters, Markers

Expert tip

Use real user feedback to validate each stage of the experience map.



QR CODE LINK TO TEMPLATES

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1BsOCt6dZsi5BxN_v5VCl7tFfhEsrpw2H?usp=sharing

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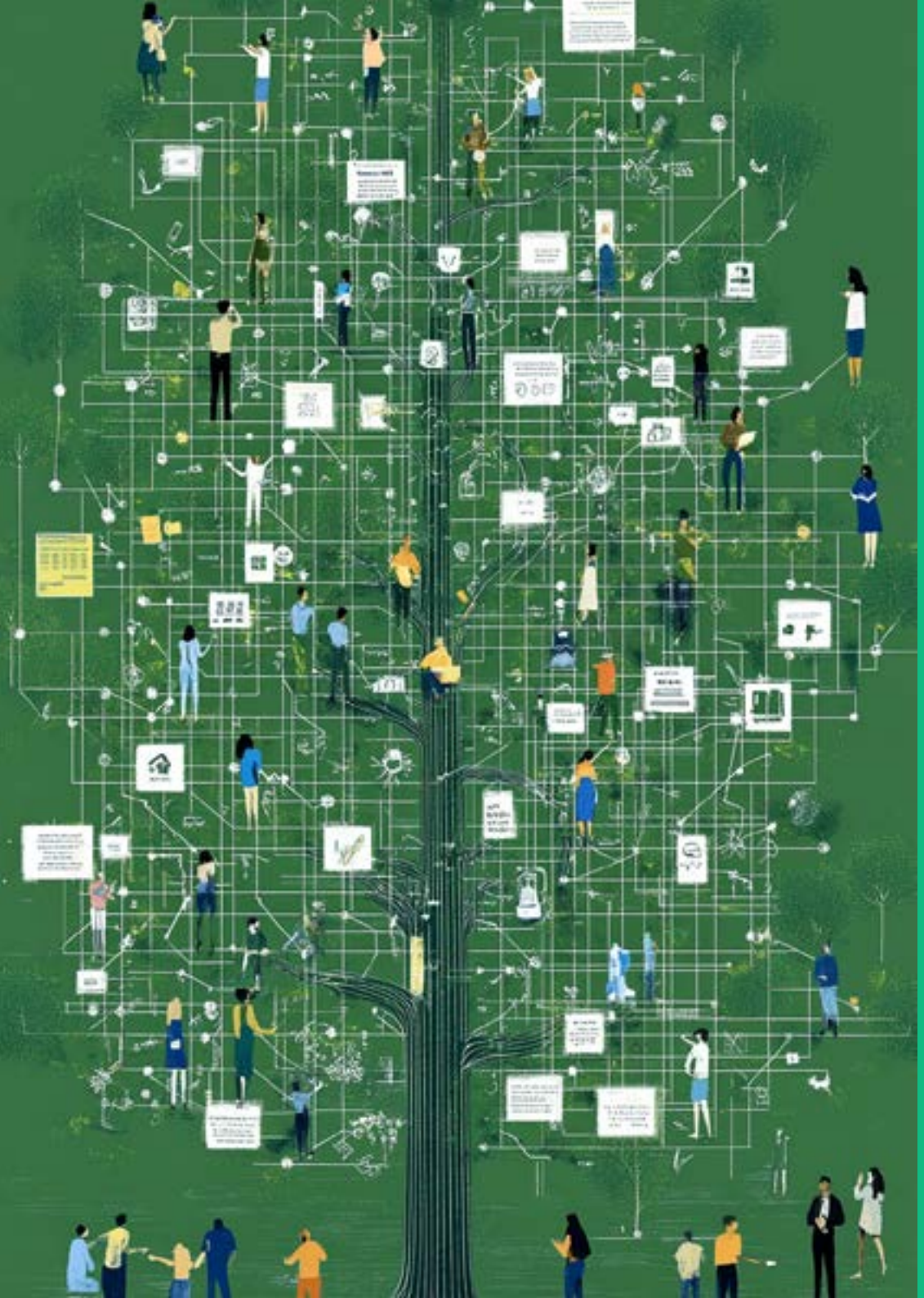
Sustainability Phase:
Keeping the Community Alive & Scaling Impact

Innovation is not a one-time event—**it's a continuous process that thrives on engagement**, adaptation, and long-term commitment. A successful Distance Lab does not just produce solutions; it builds a movement of people committed to sustaining the change.

This phase focuses on **embedding solutions into long-term strategies**, aligning stakeholders, and creating structures that allow communities to **stay active**. It is not just about having an idea, but about ensuring it can be implemented, measured, and sustained.

A project is only as strong as its team. To keep the momentum alive, participants need to stay engaged, share progress, and **keep conversations going** even after the initial project ends. Future Trends Mapping, Community Building, and KPI Design ensure that solutions don't just fade away but become **lasting and scalable innovations**.

Attitude to Adopt:
Be committed, inclusive, and strategic—your role doesn't end when the project does; it continues as part of a growing movement.



Theory of Change Workshop

Define long-term goals and milestones in a structured way to align teams and stakeholders around a common vision.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Clarify the Desired Impact** – Define the long-term change you aim to create.

2: **Identify Key Milestones** – Break down the impact into measurable outcomes.

3: **Map Necessary Actions** – Determine what actions will lead to the outcomes.

4: **Identify Assumptions & Risks** – Discuss what could influence success.

5: **Document the Theory of Change** – Create a visual map linking actions to results.

6: **Validate with Stakeholders** – Ensure alignment and feasibility.

7: **Refine & Implement** – Adjust based on feedback and integrate into strategy.

Outcome

A Theory of Change framework that provides a clear roadmap for long-term impact.

Tools for online setup:
Miro, Google Sheets

Tools for offline setup:
Whiteboards, Markers

Expert tip

Keep it flexible—real-world conditions change, so revisit and refine your strategy periodically.

Future Trends Mapping

Analyze emerging trends and possible future scenarios to anticipate market or user needs.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Research Macro Trends** – Identify major shifts in technology, society, or consumer behavior.

2: **Brainstorm Possible Futures** – Explore best-case, worst-case, and alternative scenarios.

3: **Map Trends onto a Timeline** – Organize potential changes in short-, medium-, and long-term impacts.

4: **Discuss Implications** – Evaluate how these changes affect your business, users, or industry.

5: **Develop Adaptive Strategies** – Plan how to capitalize on or mitigate future challenges.

Outcome

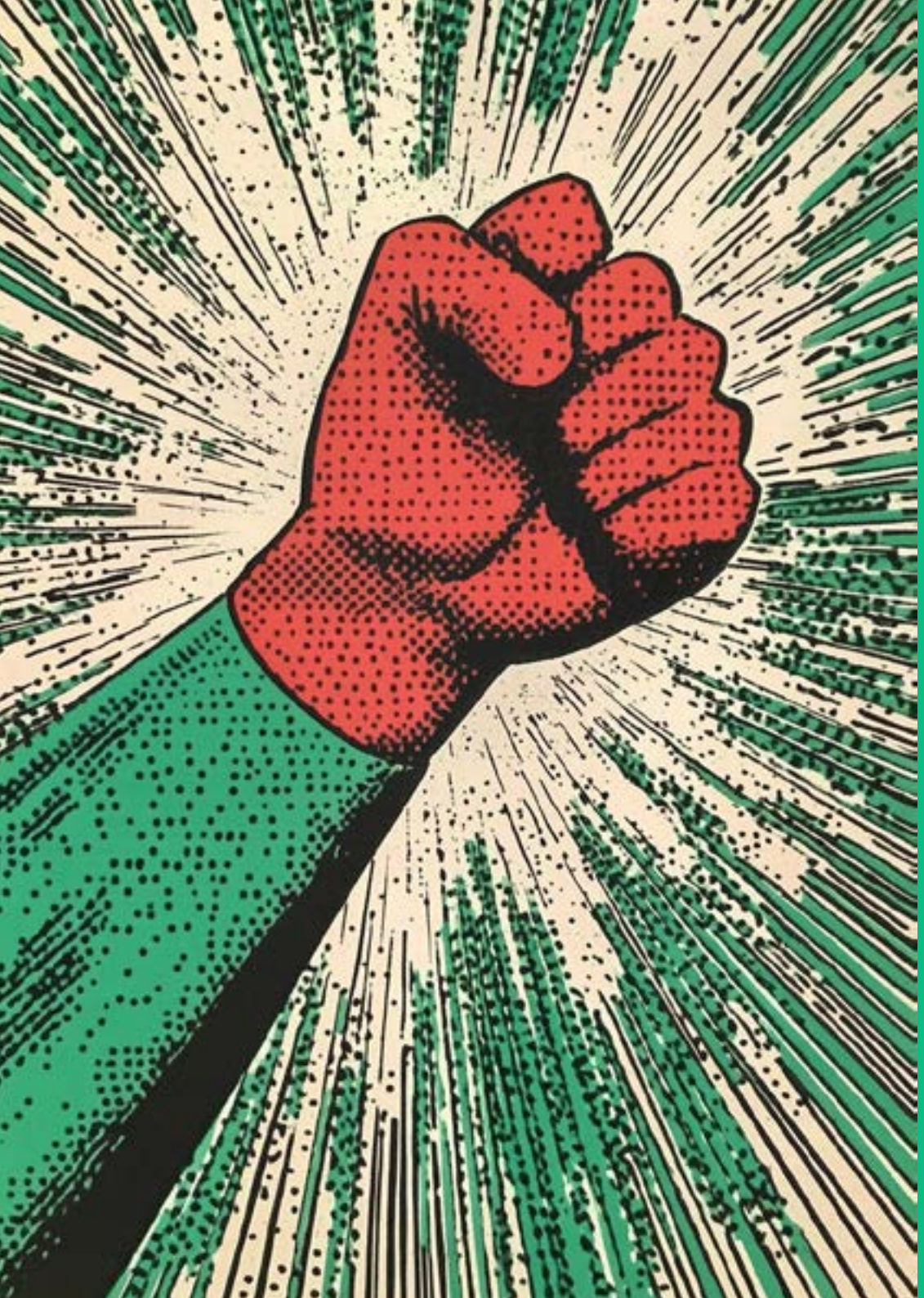
A set of documented future scenarios to inform strategy and decision-making.

Tools for online setup:
Google slides Jamboard, Miro

Tools for offline setup:
Sticky Notes, Flipcharts

Expert tip

Encourage “wild” future predictions—some of the most radical ideas may become reality.



SWOT Analysis

Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to make informed strategic decisions.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Focus Area** – Decide whether to analyze a product, team, or company.

2: **Draw a SWOT Grid** – Divide it into four quadrants.

3: **List Strengths** – Identify internal advantages and unique capabilities.

4: **Identify Weaknesses** – Outline internal limitations or challenges.

5: **Find Opportunities** – Note external factors that could benefit the project.

6: **Recognize Threats** – Determine external risks that may impact success.

7: **Prioritize & Act** – Develop strategies to maximize strengths and mitigate weaknesses.

Outcome

A SWOT analysis summary with identified action areas for strategic growth.

Tools for online setup:
Google Sheets, Miro

Tools for offline setup:
Printed SWOT Templates

Expert tip

Hidden opportunities often emerge from weaknesses and threats—look closely.

KPI Design

Develop clear, measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track the success and impact of your Distance Lab initiatives. A strong KPI framework ensures that teams can assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and maintain long-term sustainability.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define Your Success Metrics** – What does success look like for your project? Consider user engagement, prototype effectiveness, or implementation rate.

2: **Break Down Key Categories** – Identify quantitative (e.g., number of users engaged, ...) and qualitative (e.g., user satisfaction, ...) indicators.

3: **Align with Stakeholders** – Ensure KPIs reflect the goals of the team, organization, and end-users.

4: **Select Measurement Methods** – Choose how data will be collected (surveys, ...).

5: **Set Benchmarks & Targets** – Define what success looks like (e.g., "80% of users complete the onboarding process", ...).

6: **Monitor & Adjust KPIs** – Regularly review data, and adjust KPIs based on real-world insights.

Outcome

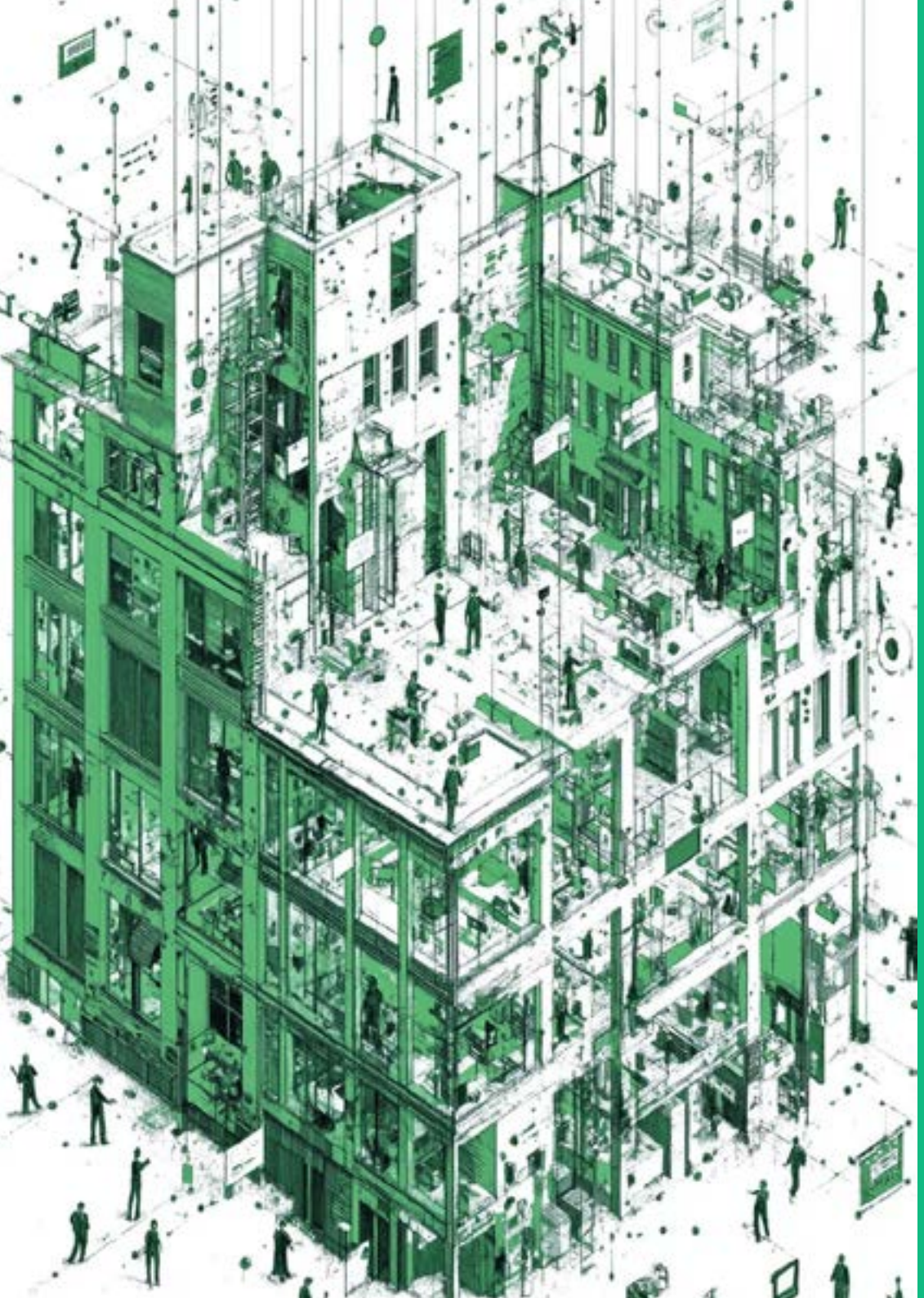
A well-defined KPI framework that helps teams measure progress, impact, and areas for improvement.

Tools for online setup:
Google Sheets, Notion, Airtable, Power BI

Tools for offline setup:
Printed KPI Dashboards, Whiteboards, Post-Its for metric tracking

Expert tip

KPIs should be actionable! If a metric doesn't help you improve decision-making, rethink why you're tracking it.



Community Building

Foster long-term engagement by building strong relationships with users, contributors, and stakeholders.

Step by step Instructions

1: **Define the Community Purpose** – Clarify the goals and value of the community.

2: **Identify Target Members** – Determine who should be involved and why.

3: **Set Up Communication Channels** – Choose platforms for engagement (Slack, Discord, Forums).

4: **Encourage Participation** – Create activities that promote interaction and collaboration.

5: **Maintain Engagement** – Regularly share updates, ask for input, and recognize contributions.

6: **Measure and Improve** – Track engagement metrics and adapt strategies as needed.

Outcome

A sustained, engaged community that supports long-term success.

Tools for online setup:
Slack, Discord, Community Platforms

Tools for offline setup:
Community Board, Networking Events

Expert tip

Engagement is a continuous process—consistently nurture the community through meaningful interactions.

Final Thoughts

Distance Labs are more than just remote workshops—they are living, evolving spaces where collaboration, creativity, and community drive real change.

To make a Distance Lab work, every participant must:

- **Take ownership** of their role in the process.
- **Be proactive** in engaging with others and seeking insights.
- **Stay open-minded** and embrace the unexpected.
- **Support** community-driven approaches to innovation.

The strength of a Distance Lab is not in the tools or methods alone—**it's in the people**. You are part of this movement. The impact of this work depends on your energy, your engagement, and your willingness to contribute.

Let's build the future together, one experiment at a time!

https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/distancelab/

Interreg Baltic Sea Region
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