

## PREMESSA:

Design critiques is the process whereby a team gets together and reviews a design or a product prototype. Unlike a brainstorming meeting, where the goal is to come up with new ideas, a critique meeting is focused on evaluating a set of existing ideas, and possibly identify future directions or changes.

Critique is not about approval at all, it is always about improvement. The conversations that take place during a critique are not about reaching some point where it's ok to do something else, they are about the goals and principles you've set out to accomplish and how well your designs address them. A critique should generate thoughtful consideration and information that the designer reviews, then incorporates, into the next phase of work on the project.

In order to be most effective, it requires time for iteration. The link between critique and iteration is key. That is to say, it requires that the designer have the necessary time to take what they learn about their design and make informed decisions about what they will change.

### Identify owner and facilitator: [step 0]

Write their name on the board. Remind everyone: *"so-and-so is the designer. Not you. Our job today is to help her."* Pick somebody whose job is to follow the rules of the design critique and move things along quickly and efficiently.

## REGOLE PER CHI PRESENTA

No sales pitches: [step 1] Clarify any assumptions about what the presented design is intended to do, or what kind of experience it is intended to create. Starting your meeting with a long explanation of every screen from the designer is a bad idea.

*NOTA: Presentare, NON spiegare. Rispondere, NON imporre.*

Restate the project goals: [step 2] The design owner should remind everyone of the goals of this project.

Ask for what you want: [step 3] Do you want feedback on the high-level user flow, or on nitty-gritty visual polish? Be specific and you'll keep the critique focused and useful.

Leave with a task list: [step X] The facilitator keeps things moving by converting discussion into tasks. Once a problem has been converted into a task ("Frobazz widget doesn't make sense. Explore alternate designs."), you shouldn't keep talking about it. Write the task on the board. Once there are no more new tasks to capture,

you should end the meeting.

Extra comments:

- If there are questions from your teammates about your design that don't fit your intent for the meeting, make sure you come up with some way to address them outside of the meeting.
- Write on the board everything that comes out from the discussion.

## REGOLE PER CHI ASCOLTA

1. *Write it before you say it:* when everyone has to commit their opinions to paper before they share they become a lot less likely to all pile on to the same opinion.
2. *Don't design in the meeting:* while it's OK to suggest an alternate approach, don't use your design critique to solve big problems. Identify problems, but leave it up to the owner to figure out the answer.
3. *Lead into explorations of alternatives:* ask questions that surface other choices the designer might not have recognized. Postpone judgments, unless there are obvious gaps between the designer's intent, and the designs you are critiquing.
4. *If it fits with the goals of the critique,* point out situations, sequences, or elements within the design that may be problematic given what you know about customers, scenarios involved, or the project goals.
5. *Ask why:* a good design critique should ask questions like "Why did you use the darker shade of orange versus a lighter one?" or "Why is there so much negative space between those two elements?" This kind of questioning does **two things**:
  - I. Allows the designer to verbally roadmap why a decision was made.
  - II. It gives the criticizer a better opportunity to understand the design better and also the designer's approach.