

XPLANE®

Gamestorming

Four Activities to Completely Change
the Dynamic of Your Meetings

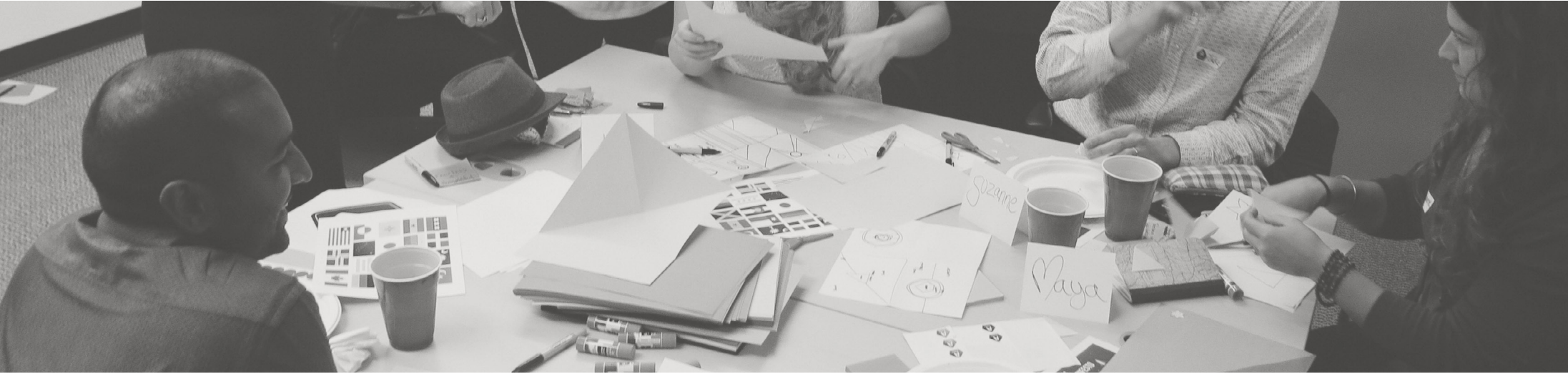




What is Gamestorming?

Gamestorming is a set of practices for facilitating innovation in the business world. A facilitator leads a group toward a goal through a series of a structured activities or games.

Gamestorming was co-developed by XPLANE's founder, Dave Gray, along with our community of clients and practitioners over many years. The practices and exercises were first published as a book in 2010.



Why it Works

When Design Thinking is reduced to a step of steps or a linear process to follow, the value that makes it so effective is utterly lost. While there is a natural sequence to solving problems with Design Thinking, the critical ingredient is the mindset of the team which must remain constant.

The design mindset must be acknowledged and practiced for the team to expect results. The mindset includes:

Optimism — Designers must inherently believe that a better future is possible

Radical collaboration — Everyone participates.

Frequent visualization — Unleash the right brain

Experimentation — Build to think.

Bias toward action — More doing, less talking.

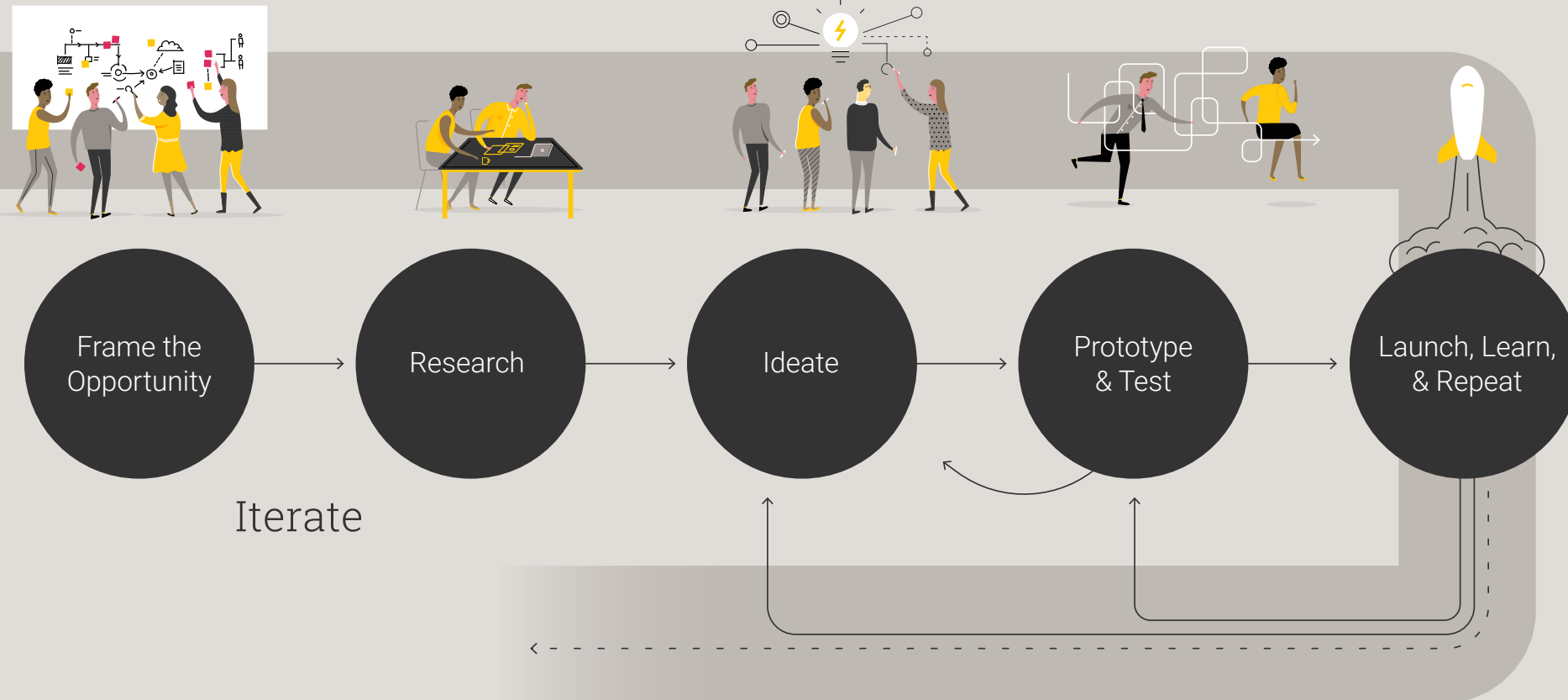
By intention, Gamestorming supports and cultivates the design mindset because it is participatory, experiential, and energizing. Gamestorming is an invitation to work differently by embracing an agile, scalable approach to problem solving.

Design Thinking

An Iterative, Collaborative Approach to Solving Problems



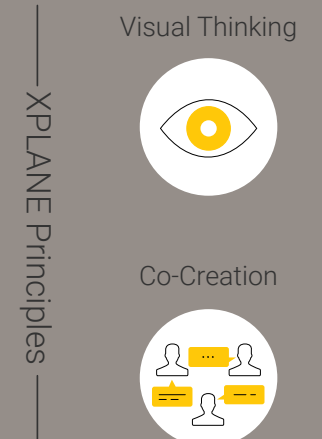
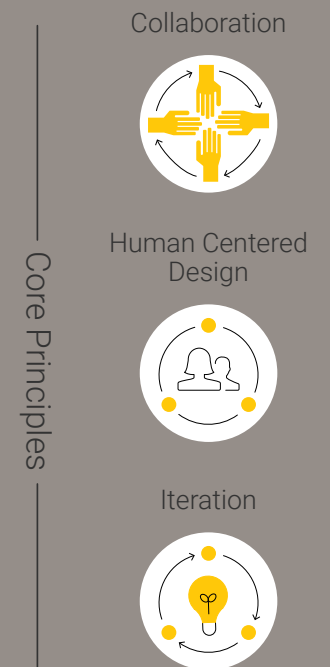
Process



Additional Resources & Skills



Principles



Post-up and Affinity Map

(one idea per Post it)



What's the purpose of your meeting? Whether it's to generate ideas around a topic or to dive into the complexities of a specific company roadblock, challenge your meeting mates to brainstorm as many thoughts as possible in a limited amount of time on Post-it® notes. Discover patterns by sorting and clustering language-based information into relationships. Use an affinity diagram when you want to get equal feedback from everyone in the room, find categories and meta-categories within a cluster of ideas, and figure out which ideas are most common within the group.

How to Play



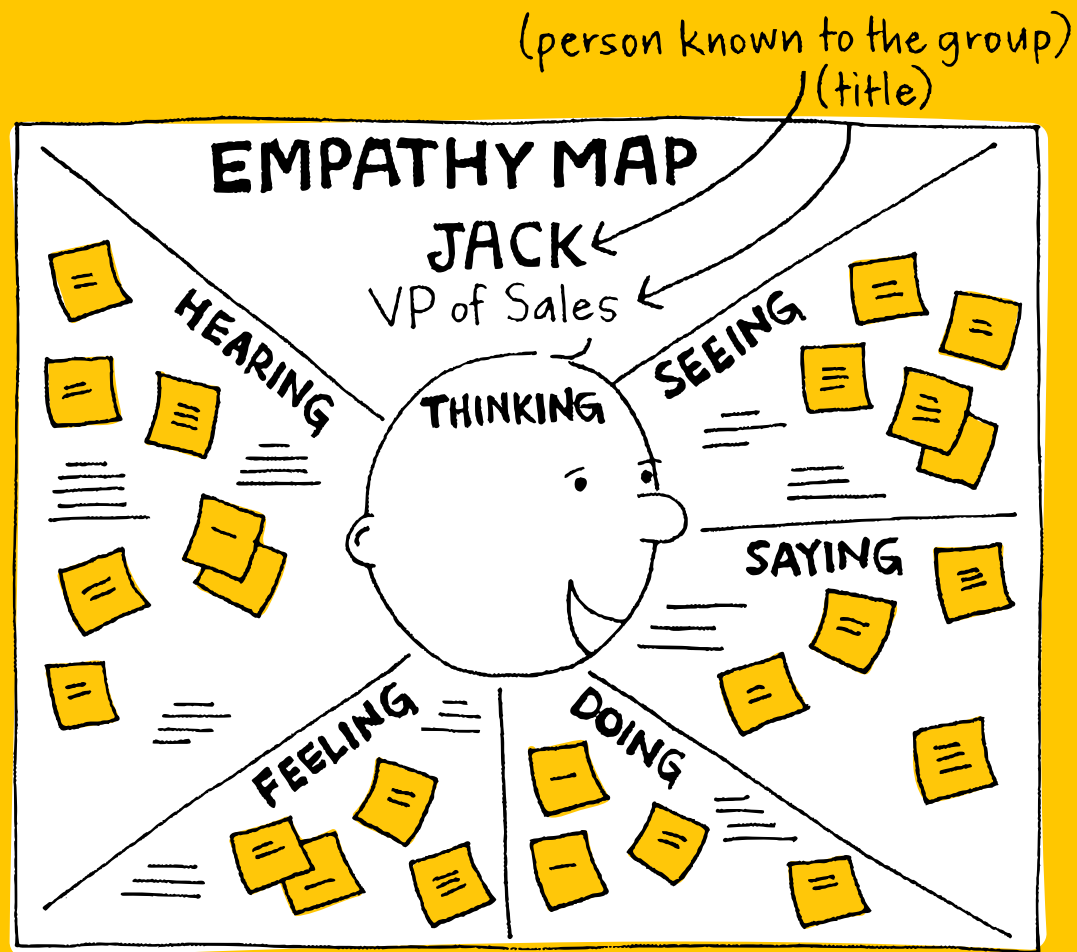
Up to 20 players

1. Write a question the players will respond to.
2. Ask each player to take 5-10 minutes to generate responses silently to the question on Post-it® notes.
3. Have each player post-up their Post-it® notes of ideas and responses one at a time allowing each participant to have an equal say on the topic at hand.
4. Together as a group, sort the ideas into columns (or clusters) based on relationships. Which ideas are similar? (Redundancy in ideas is OK; don't discard stickynotes because they're already represented. It's helpful to leave repeated ideas posted since it indicates to the group how many people are thinking the same thing.)

Pro Tip: Create a parking lot. Move any ideas that don't appear to fall into a natural category off to the side in a "parking lot." Which ideas just don't fit into these clusters?

5. Once the content is sorted, ask the group to suggest categories that represent the clusters you've created. Write the category titles they agree on at the top of the cluster. Focus on which categories get the most approval from the group.

Empathy Map



Gain a deeper level of understanding of a client, prospect, partner, co-worker, or boss with an Empathy Map. By putting yourself in the shoes of someone else, you and your team can better understand their motivations. The empathy map breaks down what your co-workers are hearing, saying, thinking, and seeing, so you get a big picture view of each person's unique perspective equally—even if they don't feel comfortable speaking up.

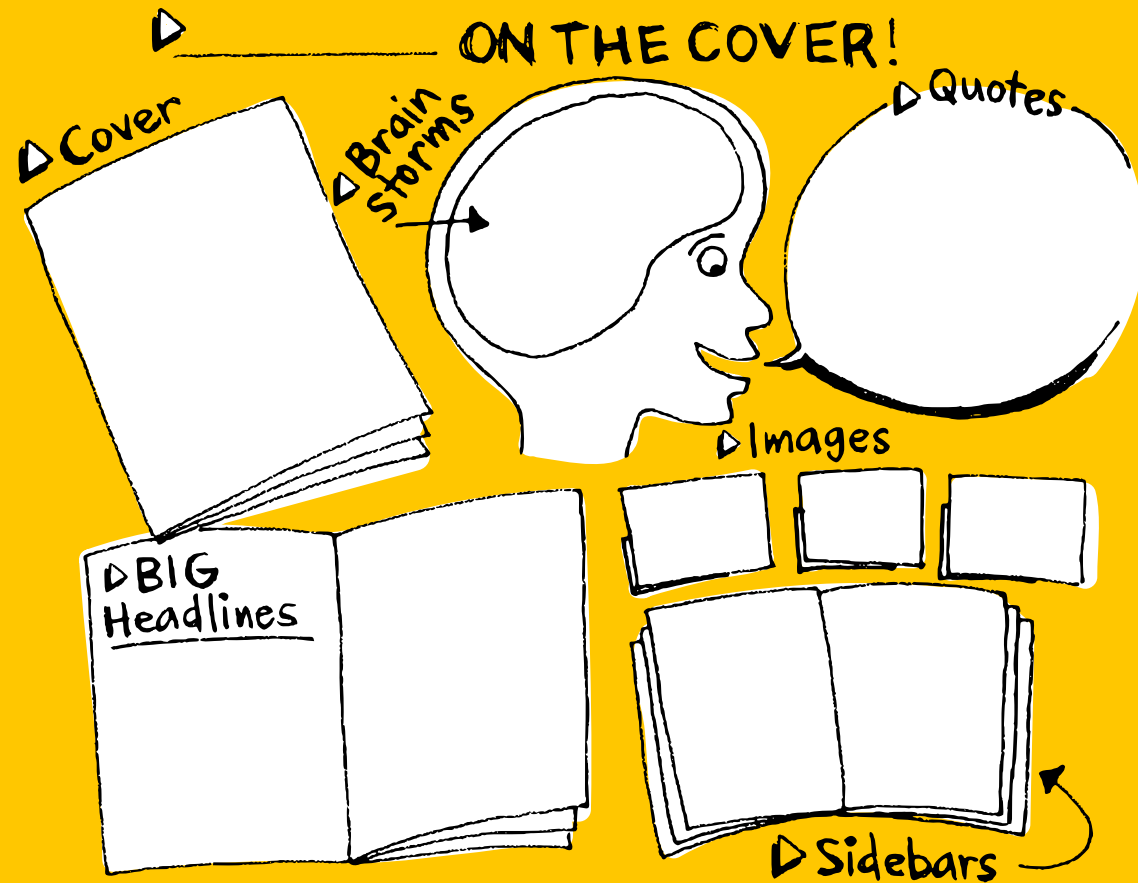
How to Play



Any number of players

1. Draw a circle to represent the person you want to better understand. Give the circle a name and some identifying information, such as a job title. Think of the circle as the profile of a person's head—add eyes, a mouth, and a nose. These simple details will help you project yourself into the experience of that person.
2. Determine a question you have for that stakeholder. If you had a question you would want to ask them, or a situation in their life you want to understand, what would that be?
3. Divide the circle into sections that represent aspects of that person's sensory experience. What are they thinking, feeling, saying, doing, hearing? Label the appropriate sections on the image.
4. Now it's time for you to practice empathy: Try to project yourself into that person's experience and understand the context you want to explore. Start to fill in the diagram with real, tangible, sensory experiences. What might they hear and how would they hear it? What are they thinking and how would they express it?
5. Ask others to review your map, make suggestions, and add details or context. Over time you will hone your ability to understand and empathize with others in your business ecosystem, which will help you improve your relationships and your results.

Cover Story



Think expansively around an ideal future state of your organization. Suspend all disbelief and envision a future that is so stellar that it landed your organization on the cover of a well-known magazine. Encourage your people to “think big” and beyond what’s possible. Now, pretend the future is here and is being reported on by mainstream media. How would your company show up on the cover of a magazine?

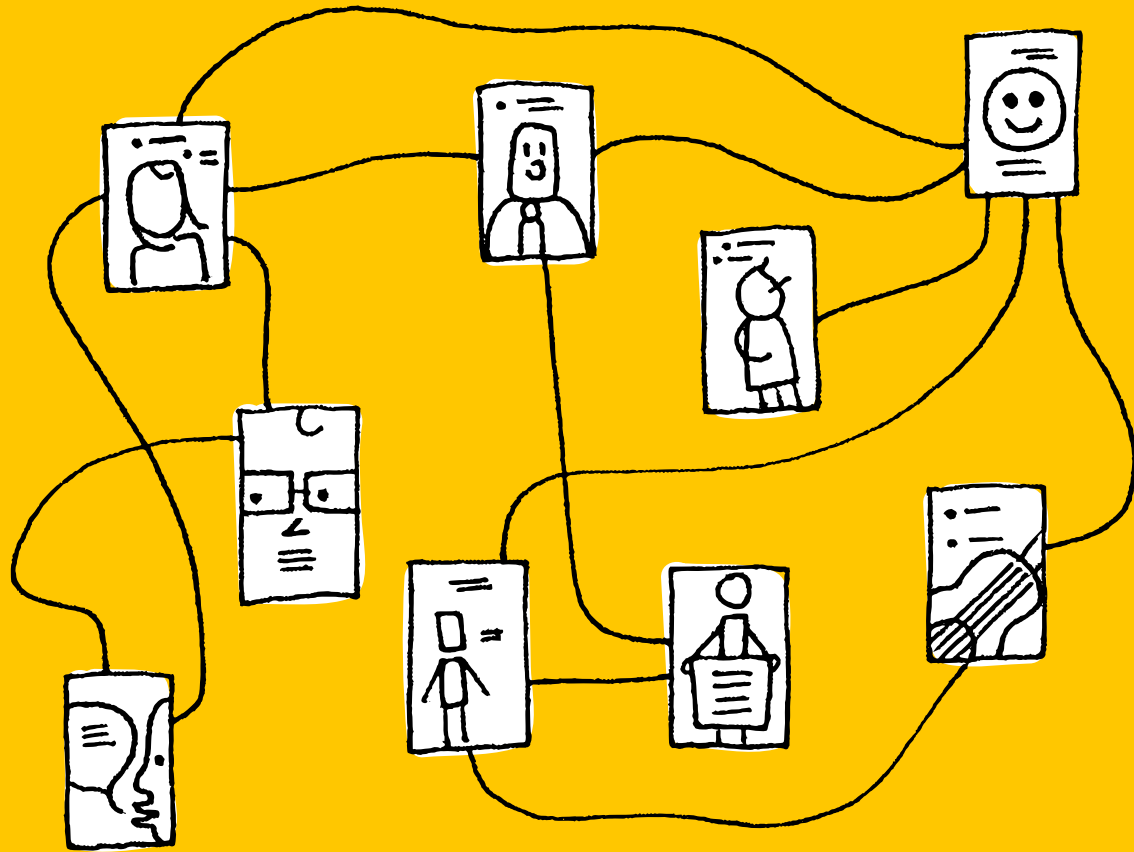
How to Play



Any number of players

1. Draw a large-scale template with five categories: cover, brainstorm, quotes, images, big headlines, and sidebars.
 - “Cover” tells the big story of their success.
 - “Headlines” convey the substance of the cover story.
 - “Sidebars” reveal interesting facets of the cover story.
 - “Quotes” can be from anyone as long as they’re related to the story.
 - “Brainstorm” is for documenting initial ideas for the cover story.
 - “Images” are for supporting the content with illustrations.
2. Explain the object of the game to the players and define each category on the template:
3. Break the players into groups of four to six. Make sure there are markers and one template for each group. Tell the players that to populate the template they can either select a scribe or draw on it together.
4. Ask the players to imagine the best-case scenario for the company. Allow them to spend five quiet minutes imagining their own stories before they work together to agree on one. Give the groups time to generate this “story of the year” and represent it with visuals on their template.
5. Bring the groups back together and ask for them to present their visions for 5–10 minutes.
6. Note any common themes and areas of agreement; these themes reveal shared hopes and also plant seeds for real possibilities. Ask for observations, insights, and concerns about the future state.

Low-Tech Social Network



Find connections across a large group of people by co-creating a mural-sized, visual network of connections. Over the course of the event, encourage participants to browse the network, make new friends, and watch what new links are being made around them.

How to Play



For large groups in an event setting

1. Create your avatar: On a 5×8 index card, have participants draw their own avatar—a profile picture of who they are with their name on the bottom.

Pro Tip: Add Variation! Ask the group to write two words on the card that “tag” who they are or what they’re interested in.

2. Build the network: On a large, open whiteboard space, have participants post-up their avatars on to the wall.
3. Make connections: Throughout the event, have participants find the people they know and draw lines to make connections. Different lines can be labeled different things like “friends with” or “rides the bus with.” As this continues, it will likely result in previously undiscovered links and new friends!



XPLANE[®]

is a global consulting partner that helps large organizations transform their business and accelerate results.

We combine the strategic expertise and strength of a consulting firm with the creative power of a design studio.

We're unique because we use visual thinking, design facilitation, co-creation, and people-centered design to simplify complexity, increase alignment and engagement, and create lasting results in your organization.

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