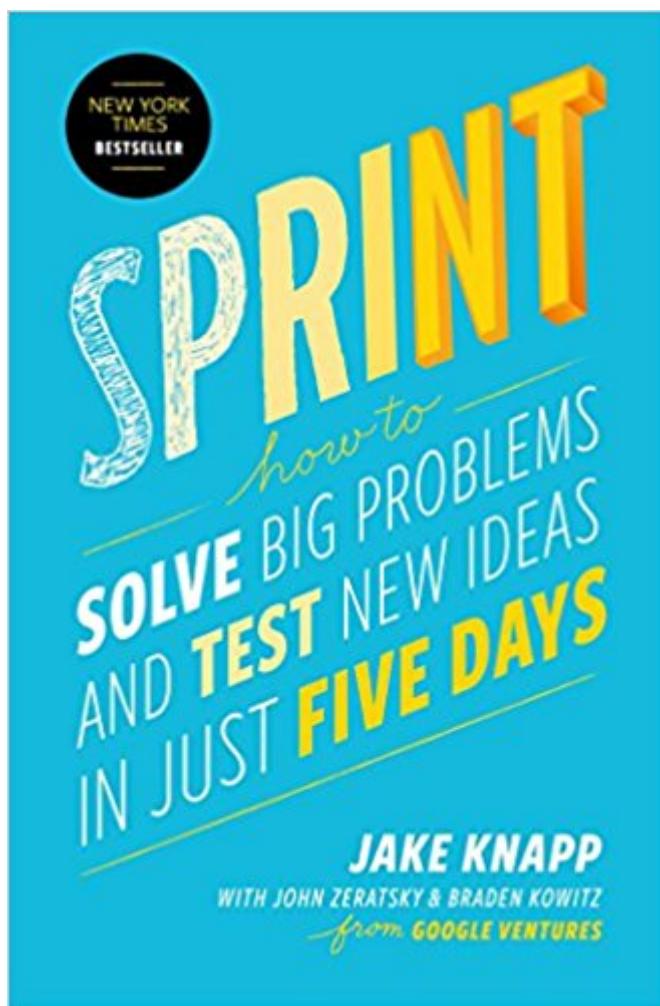


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# Sprint: How To Solve Big Problems And Test New Ideas In Just Five Days



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER *Sprint* offers a transformative formula for testing ideas that works whether you're at a startup or a large organization. Within five days, you'll move from idea to prototype to decision, saving you and your team countless hours and countless dollars. A must read for entrepreneurs of all stripes.

• Eric Ries, author of *The Lean Startup* From three partners at Google Ventures, a unique five-day process for solving tough problems, proven at more than a hundred companies. Entrepreneurs and leaders face big questions every day: What's the most important place to focus your effort, and how do you start? What will your idea look like in real life? How many meetings and discussions does it take before you can be sure you have the right solution? Now there's a surefire way to answer these important questions: the sprint. Designer Jake Knapp created the five-day process at Google, where sprints were used on everything from Google Search to Google X. He joined Braden Kowitz and John Zeratsky at Google Ventures, and together they have completed more than a hundred sprints with companies in mobile, e-commerce, healthcare, finance, and more. A practical guide to answering critical business questions, *Sprint* is a book for teams of any size, from small startups to Fortune 100s, from teachers to nonprofits. It's for anyone with a big opportunity, problem, or idea who needs to get answers today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Every business leader I know worries about the same thing: Are we moving fast enough? The genius of Jake Knapp’s Sprint is its step-by-step breakdown of what it takes to solve big problems and do work that matters with speed and urgency. A sprint is a cure for what ails companies in an ever faster world.” •Beth Comstock, vice chair of GE “The key to success, often, is building the right habits. But which habits work best? Sprint offers powerful methods for hatching ideas, solving problems, testing solutions—and finding those small, correct habits that make all the right behaviors fall in place.” Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit* “To quote one of my colleagues, “don’t get ready, get started.” Through hard won experience Jake Knapp and the team at Google Ventures have refined an efficient, hands-on approach to solving your product, service and experience design challenges. Try the book and try a Sprint.” Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO and author of *Change By Design* “Read this book and do what it says if you want to build better products faster.” Ev Williams, founder of Medium, Blogger, and Twitter “Sprint teaches you a novel process for solving really thorny problems in just 5 days. It’s full of helpful, entertaining stories that will make it easier for you to succeed. What more, exactly, would you demand from a book? I wish all business books were this useful.” Dan Heath, co-author of *Made to Stick*, *Switch*, and *Decisive*

Jake Knapp created the Google Ventures sprint process and has run more than a hundred sprints with startups such as 23andme, Slack, Nest, and Foundation Medicine. Previously, Jake worked at Google, leading sprints for everything from Gmail to Google X. He is currently among the world’s tallest designers. John Zeratsky has designed mobile apps, medical reports, and a daily newspaper (among other things). Before joining Google Ventures, he was a design lead at YouTube and an early employee of FeedBurner, which Google acquired in 2007. John writes about design and productivity for Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, and Wired. He studied journalism at the University of Wisconsin. Braden Kowitz founded the Google Ventures design team in 2009 and pioneered the role of “design partner” at a venture capital firm. He has advised close to two hundred startups on product design, hiring, and team culture. Before joining Google Ventures, Braden led design for several Google products, including Gmail, Google Apps for Business, Google Spreadsheets, and Google Trends.

What Jake and his co-authors prescribe in the book sounds rather too good to be true and unconventional, but it has made a world of sense to me. What usually takes months and months of

hopeless meetings, emails and expenditure has been narrowed down to just 5 days of intensive work by all the KEY parties. Emphasis has been put on 'key' parties as most often businesses approach to answer their biggest questions with just 2 or 3 people from the top management involved. I like how they advise startups to focus on most pressing questions. I can see how many founders and deciders can get lost in a web of questions during startup. They recommend an ideal size of the sprint to be seven people or less, I couldn't have agreed more. And this is only one of the many ingenious tips I liked. Another one is the 'no device rule'. I've always been a fan of whiteboards but these guys have taken the idea to another level. I quote: " the simultaneous visibility of project material helps us identify patterns and encourages creative synthesis to occur more readily than when these resources are hidden away in file folders, notebooks, or PowerPoint decks." Another key insight I got from the book is the reminder that 'nobody knows everything'. I can imagine many CEOs thinking this way due to hubris. I quote: "..the information is distributed asymmetrically across the team and across the company. In the sprint, you've got to gather it and make sense of it, and asking experts is the best and fastest way to do that." The 'How might we' method was also a great light-bulb. Rephrasing business obstacles into helpful questions. Another helpful method is the 'lightning demos which involves finding inspirational ideas from both within your company and even outside your industry. I could imagine limiting myself to my competitors only, but stretching as far as other businesses who do nothing remotely similar is a revelation. Another ingenious solution suggested by the authors is the 'mind reader' - a sketch of complex ideas as a simple drawing of boxes and text. This then forms a basis for a prototype. They emphasize on the quality of the solution as opposed to the artistry of the drawings - they really do give hope to people like us who wouldn't know what to do with a brush :) They further elaborate on the usefulness of sketching, I quote, "once your ideas become concrete, they can be critically and fairly evaluated by the rest of the team - without any sales pitch. And perhaps, most important of all, sketching allows every person to develop those concrete ideas while working alone." Crazy 8s is another brilliant idea introduced by the team. An 8 minute exercise of sketching 8 variations of your strongest ideas. I found it quite unconventional, and hence my belief that it will work. Basically the exercise helps you consider alternatives and also serves as an excellent warm up for the main event. I found the 'prototype mindset' to be the best idea in the whole book. The authors suggest building a facade and testing it, this initially sounded uncomfortable to me, but I later saw the genius in it. I quote, "To prototype your solution, you'll need a temporary change of philosophy: from perfect to just enough, from long-term quality to temporary simulation." I can see how this idea can save a huge amount of time and money for a company down the line. In the end the authors emphasize the best part about

the sprint, which is the chance to learn whether you are on the right track with your ideas in just 5 days. "You can have efficient failures that are good news, flawed successes that need more work, and many other outcomes." I couldn't agree more. The choice of examples used in the book was also great, not exactly Malcolm Gladwell level, but still inspiring nonetheless. I recommend the book to Startup founders, top company management or any one looking for unconventional methods to improve productivity on any sphere of their lives.

"It's what work should be about" â œ working together to build something that matters to people. This is the best use of your time. This is a sprint." This was a great sentence to finish the book, and it's a great sentence to begin working in a better way. In the preface, the author states he had his first child. When he returned to the office, he wanted his time on the job to be as meaningful as his time with his family. He took a hard look at his habits and saw that, "I wasn't spending my effort on the most important work". He discussed how improving team processes became an obsession for him. Through his experience of working with teams to create new products at Google, and experimenting on improving the way teams work, he found that focusing on individual work, having time to prototype, and an inescapable deadline produced far better results. Running the 5 day sprint described in the book enables a team to easily find out if they are on the right track before they commit to the risky business of building and launching their products. The sprint process however is just as applicable to teams launching internal products/solutions/services. This way of work is applicable to any company, not just startups. The author shares how other Google Ventures team members added to the sprint process to make it better through the years. Braden Kowitz added story-centered design â œ which focuses on the whole customer experience instead of individual components or technologies. John Zeratsky helped to ensure that each sprint starts at the end, so the business's would be able to identify and answer their most important questions. Michael Margolis encouraged them to finish each sprint with a real world test. By putting your prototype in front of real customers/prospects, you didn't have to guess whether your solutions were good, at the end of the sprint you got answers. Over the last 10 years, I have facilitated interactive workshops to help teams get a shared understanding of the business problem they are trying to solve, which is a precursor to a shared commitment to solve the problem. Having a solid understanding of the research behind collaborative approaches to work, and understanding the approach to use based on the problem domain you are in is critical to a successful outcome. Because of my background and real-world experience, I recognize how effective the sprint design is, and feel confident in using the process with any client I

work with. The psychology behind the methods is real, the creativity of the design will engage all who participate, and you will build better products. If you are passionate about helping teams work more effectively, if you care about making work a more engaging experience, if you have a burning desire to improve customers' lives, read this book and then USE this book to run sprints.

The book content is great and the process methods and practice are well defined for any UX professional to pick up and be effective with out of the box. Four stars because the Kindle version is dreadful, don't buy it terrible image formatting of tiny indistinguishable blobs. The Kindle typography is also borderline. Buy paper you will thank me.

I'm a product manager and the Sprint Book has been a great new strategy for our product team to validate quickly! It's a flexible method to build on your team's energy and domain knowledge in 5 days. Our team is entirely remote so when we get together it's helpful to have proven strategy guide our product initiatives. I also highly recommend picking up Design Sprint Kits to accompany the Sprint Book because it has all the supplies included: A Design Sprint Office Kit for Creativity and Productivity. Either way, read this book.

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