

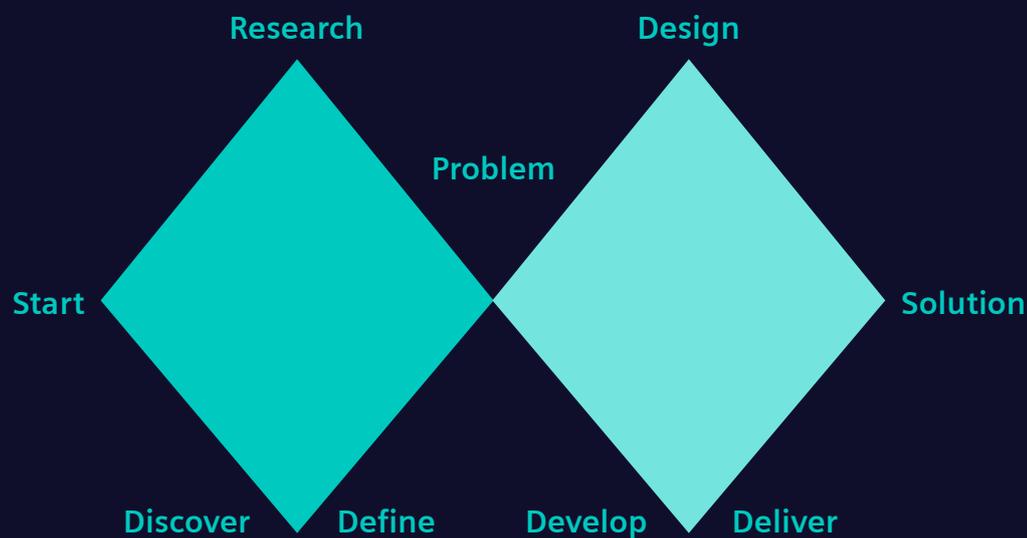
# The Double Diamond-Model

The Double Diamond is a design process model that helps creatives to develop a solution to a problem in four steps. Developed by the British Design Council, the Double Diamond model can be used to develop any product. It is not only versatile but also easy to understand and use.

As the name suggests, the Double Diamond model is visualised by two connected diamond shapes. They represent the different stages of a design process. The first diamond is subdivided in two phases that help answer the question: What is the problem we need a solution for?

Or more specifically asked from a product-development point of view: What is the right product we need to create to meet a specific need?

The second diamond answers the question: What is the right solution for the problem? Or again more specifically: How do we make the product in such a way, that it works for the user and meets their needs? It's easier to understand how it works if we look at the model and its single phases more closely.



## Phase one: Discover the problem

The first diamond is about research, this phase is about understanding the customer or user and their needs. It is important to stay open-minded at this stage. You might already have a lot of knowledge about the subject but stay curious, ask different and unusual questions. Let yourself be surprised by new findings. Make sure you have a time limit to this task though because there is always something new to learn and you might be researching for years without setting a time limit. Also, you will gain more knowledge while you work on the project anyway.

Tools that might help you at this stage are interviews, surveys, and everything else that makes it possible for the design team to identify with the future user. Be empathic and try to see the product through their eyes: What would it need to make you happy. Ideally the outcome of the process is a whole list of problems (read: needs) the user has.

## Phase two: Define the main Problem

At this stage, it is time for divergent thinking. Sort through your findings from the first phase and identify the main problem. It can very well be that what the user needs is something completely different than what you thought initially. (Re)define the project's aim and what you need to find a solution for. This will result in a design brief that you can use to start the phases of the second diamond.

A useful tool at this stage is a big board for you to write down and group ideas on. Don't be surprised if you find more than one interesting problem to solve. Focus on the most promising one and leave the others for other projects. It is much more likely that you will find a successful solution to a clearly defined problem, than to one that tries to include all your findings from the first phase.

## Third Phase: Developing solutions

The second diamond is about creativity. You know the problem and now you can gather all the possible solutions to it. Don't limit yourself at this point but think outside the box. The focus is on quantity rather than quality at this stage. Restrictions like "too expansive", "never done before" or "this won't work because of x, y and z" can be ignored for the moment.

Brainstorming, ideation, and workshops can all help at this point. Also, discuss the problem with people from different fields of expertise. For you to receive feedback early on in the design process, it is advisable to build an inexpensive prototype as soon as you have a few good ideas. Let people use and test it out, to find out what works and what doesn't.

## Phase four: Deliver a solution

The fourth and last phase is about narrowing the focus, gather the feedback and compare the possible solutions. Which one is the best? If you have one or two solutions that might work, try to build a better prototype, and test it again. Don't be discouraged if the user finds flaws in your prototype and you have to evaluate bigger parts of your project.

At this stage it is important to put the users need over your own wants. It might be that you developed something you are absolutely in love with, but its targeted group does not understand how it works. The bottom line is: they won't use it if they don't get it. So, as hard as it can be, let that solution go.

## Advantages of the Double Diamond model

The Double Diamond model offers you the freedom to explore and let's your creativity run wild, but it also helps to narrow down the ideas to create something that is doable. Its main advantages are:

- It is not linear but allows for movement: If you, for example, find that you lack important knowledge in the Define-Stage, you can easily go back to the Discover-Stage and then back to defining the problem.
- It is excellent for team-projects because very member of the team always knows in which stage of the design process you are and what is asked of everyone at any given moment.
- It puts the focus on the user. The process starts with finding out what the user needs and then takes their input and feedback seriously. That way, it is more likely that the users will understand and use the developed product.
- It allows you to find out what the real problem is. Part of the Double Diamond process is to ask questions without assumptions. This makes it easy to identify needs and problems that no one had thought of at the beginning of the process. It might mean you end up with a completely different product than everybody thought at the beginning – which is absolutely okay.
- It is easy to communicate: Not only you and your team want to know where you are in the design process, but also your investors and clients. The Double Diamond is easy to grasp, even if you have never been involved in any creative processes.