

SCAN / FOCAS / ACT

DesignShop® events follow a general pattern—Scan, Focus, and Act—which roughly corresponds to the three days of a classical DesignShop forum. Any facilitator or multiple time participant in a DesignShop will tell you that, well, it's not that simple and the different phases often coexist within each other recursively. That is correct, but understanding starts with clarifying the most basic, linear take on the SCAN-FOCUS-ACT model.

Scan

In the SCAN phase, participants reach out to explore ideas far outside their usual range of expertise. People will expand their usual time horizons, work with complex systems models, and learn rapid information-gathering techniques. They will look at the problem from a whole range of vantage points that they have never visited before. Just as important, everyone will get to know the skills and biases of fellow participants. During Scan, they are encouraged explicitly to avoid trying to draw direct connection with the problem that brought them here.

An effective SCAN should accomplish the following:

- Establish the aspirations of the session and frame the "art of the possible".
- Deliver basic data, insights and background to illuminate and provide context for the work ahead.
- Introduce the participants to each other and give each one a chance to get his or her personal experience, opinions and perspectives into play.
- Engage with industry subject matter experts regarding leading practices and benchmarks.
- Uncover critical assumptions and issues.
- Explore creative, fresh perspectives on the work.
- Create a common language and build the foundation for a high-performing team, including how to make the most of this

unique collaborative environment.

Focus

Only after a thorough Scan do you move into the FOCUS phase in which you formulate performance specs for the optimal solution to your problem. You are focusing on the problem, but you are also generating options for what that problem really is and therefore, how it will be solved. These will range from no-risk to absolutely wacky. It's important to come at the problem many different times from many different angles. There is a saying at DesignShops that if you do seven iterations of coming at, looking, and redesigning your problem, the results will be a thousand times better. The problem definition changes, often beyond recognition, from the one you originally brought with you.

In the FOCUS phase, the group

- Tests and evaluates alternatives.
- Conducts scenarios and simulations.
- Builds, combines, and iterates model solutions.
- Uncovers and begins to remove barriers to change.
- Builds a common view of what is and is not possible or desirable.

Act

In ACT, strategy is turned into tactics, and tactics into action steps which include target dates of completion. The DesignShop event is not over until there is an action plan in hand.

In the ACT phase we

- Create group alignment and the intention to take action.
- Make detailed decisions.
- Design and engineer all aspects of the solution.
- Establish detailed short and medium-term action plans.