

I want to  
collect input from others  
by observing and  
learning from  
everyday life



## PEOPLE SHADOWING

LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

INSPIRED BY  
Lovlie L.,Reason B.,Polaine A. (2013) Service Design: From Insight to Implementation. p54-p57. Rosenfeld Media



REQUIRES SOME DIALOGUE with colleagues/  
peers. Plan for some time to interact and fill out  
in collaboration over a day maybe.

# What is it & why should I do it?

**Shadowing** means just that - becoming someone's shadow for a while. Following someone, or a group of people, as they live their everyday life, or go about their daily work helps to understand the environment they are part of. It also allows you to observe for yourself the contextual details that can influence a person's behaviour and motivations.

Often doing some Shadowing at the start of a project helps to familiarise yourself with a certain practice or group of people. People's everyday life can be so habitual that some issues may not be as apparent to them - sometimes observing them can reveal hidden aspects that might be the core issue or even possible solution. These observations can act not only as inspiration but also a guide to help reach the core of how your work impacts people whose lives you want to make a difference to.

## ? HOW TO USE IT

Shadowing involves making many choices: not just who to follow, but also when and how to be actively involved when you get there. You also need to think about the kind of things you're looking out for, and the ways in which you might want to record what you find. The key is preparation: balancing the need to structure what you find while staying open to the unexpected. This tool includes a quick checklist and a format to note down these findings.

This worksheet indicates some of the things you might want to record when shadowing. Don't be afraid to experiment - whether you're silently observing or actively involved will very much depend on each situation you're in. Fill out the worksheet for each person you follow. Ask your team to fill out a similar sheet for each person they follow. This is a structured way to compare your observations across the various 'participants' you and your team shadowed.

The observations you find relevant depend on the focus of your project. These could be about the people they meet, places they go to, or how they organise their life. Feel free to customise the boxes on the worksheet - the ones here are like examples to trigger some ideas.

It might be a good idea to ask a person's permission in case you want to follow them closely, though it is also possible to just observe your participant from a distance. This may depend on what is socially accepted within the specific situation or culture. Please do respect the person's space and make sure they are comfortable. You don't want to break the natural flow of how they go about their everyday life.

|   |            |          |        |
|---|------------|----------|--------|
| Where & When                            | Likes      | Dislikes | Habits |
| Who                                     |            |          |        |
| Key findings<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ | Activities | Objects  | Space  |

