# Module 3.5: Design & UX

Most MVPs don't fail because of bad design but because they don't reach enough users. Still, poor design can block user adoption early.

The goal is to make design **good enough** to be clear, usable, and trustworthy — not perfect.

# When to Hire a Designer vs Use Developer Design Skills

## Use Developer's Design Skills

- Building internal tools or B2B SaaS
- Developer has acceptable design sense
- MVP tests logic, not visual appeal

## Hire a Dedicated Designer

- Product is consumer-facing or mobile-first
- Brand or aesthetics are core to differentiation
- User flows are complex or require intuitive guidance

## The Hybrid Approach

**Week 1–2:** Designer handles brand identity, key screens, and design system basics.

**Week 3+:** Developer extends designs using that system, with designer reviews via Loom/Figma feedback.

→ Saves $2K–5K compared to full-time design involvement while maintaining quality.

# Design Brief Creation for Non-Designers

The 30-Minute Design Brief Template

## 01
___

## Reference Examples

Collect 3–5 app or website screenshots showing styles, layouts, or interactions you like. Add short notes on what stands out and what to avoid.

## 02
___

## User Context

Define who the user is, where they use it, and in what situation (e.g., mobile during commute, desktop at work).

## 03
___

## Brand Personality (3 Words)

Pick 3 contrasting traits that define your tone (e.g., *Trustworthy, Playful, Minimal*). Avoid vague terms like "modern."

## 04
___

## Practical Constraints

Note developer skill, tech stack, budget, and timeline. Designers should know what's technically and financially realistic.

# Personal experience

- put high expectations → communicate what's doable with current budget/time limitations

- hard to manage deadlines

# Wireframing Basics

## Purpose

Communicate user flow clearly — not to design visuals.

## Tools

Figma (wireframe mode), Moqups, Whimsical, or pen & paper.

## What to Wireframe

- **User Flow:** Boxes and arrows for navigation steps

- **Critical Interactions:** Show what happens on click, error, or confirmation

- **Content Hierarchy:** Mark primary, secondary, and optional content

## Quick Process

1. Draw main screens on paper – 10 min

2. Take photos or upload to tool – 15 min

3. Record 5-min Loom walkthrough

→ Total 30 min; prevents wrong builds later.

# UX Principles for MVPs

## Users should never wonder what to do next.

UX Checklist

**1** Clear Primary Action

One obvious action per screen with clear labeling.

**2** Obvious Navigation

Users always know where they are and how to go back.

**3** Feedback Everywhere

Loading, success, and error states visible.

**4** Forgiveness

Undo, confirmation, and auto-save prevent frustration.

**5** Speed Perception

Use skeletons, progress bars, and optimistic UI.

## Skip in MVP Stage

- Complex animations or transitions
- Perfect empty states
- Advanced interactions (drag, gestures)
- Full responsive polish if not critical
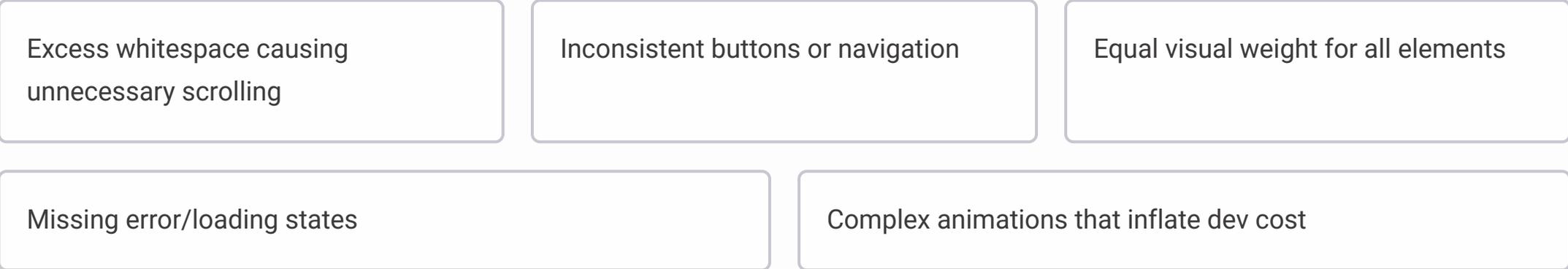
# Design Review Framework

Evaluate designs for function, clarity, and feasibility.
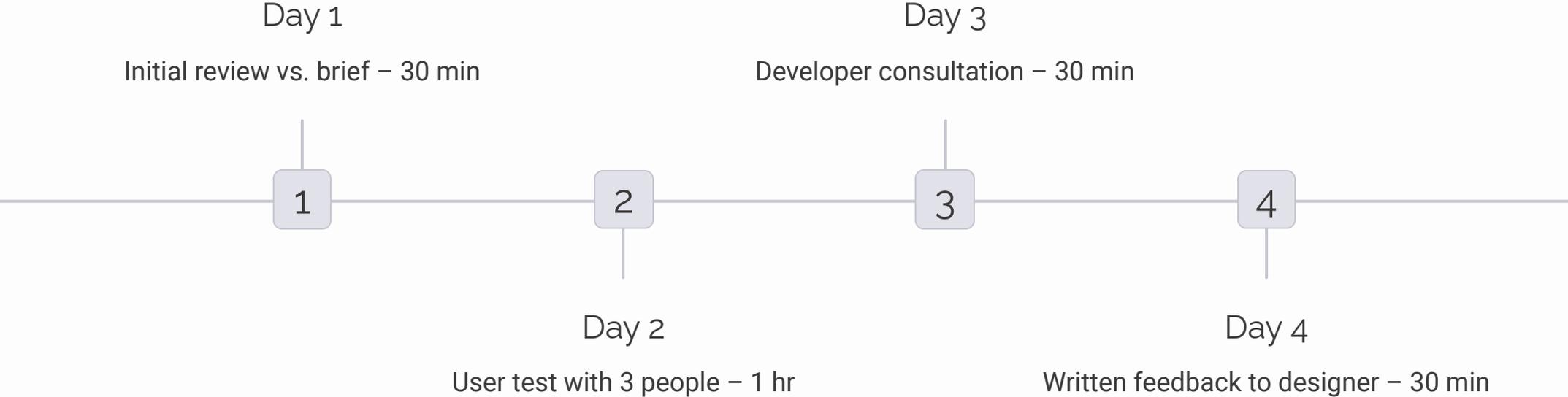
## The 4-Question Review

1 — Can users complete the core action easily?

2 — Is anything confusing or unclear?

3 — Does it match the original brief and brand tone?

4 — Can developers implement it on budget and schedule?

# Design Review Framework

## Red Flags

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Excess whitespace causing unnecessary scrolling | Inconsistent buttons or navigation | Equal visual weight for all elements |
| Missing error/loading states | Complex animations that inflate dev cost | |

## Review Process (4 Days)

**Day 1**
Initial review vs. brief – 30 min

**Day 3**
Developer consultation – 30 min

1 —— 2 —— 3 —— 4

**Day 2**
User test with 3 people – 1 hr

**Day 4**
Written feedback to designer – 30 min

# Design Handoff to Developers

## Developer Needs Checklist

- **Design System / Style Guide:** Colors, fonts, spacing, border radius, shadows
- **All Screen States:** Loading, empty, success, error, disabled
- **Interactive States:** Normal, hover, active, disabled
- **Responsive Behavior:** Desktop, tablet, mobile layouts with breakpoints
- **Assets:** Icons (SVG), images (2x/3x), logos

## The Handoff Meeting (60 min)

1. Designer walkthrough – 15m
2. Developer qs – 20 min
3. Identify and simplify complex elements – 20 min
4. Confirm delivery timeline – 5 min

Keep designer available for 1–2.

# When "Good Enough" Design Is Good Enough

## The Good Enough Test

Show designs to 5 users or similar profiles. Ask:

- Would you trust this product?
- Can you complete the main action easily?
- Does it look professional enough for its purpose?

→ If 4/5 say yes, it's ready to ship.

## Industry Standards

| Type | Expectation | Good Enough = |
| --- | --- | --- |
| B2B SaaS | Functional and clean | Clear, organized, trustworthy |
| Consumer App | Visually appealing | Modern, intuitive, consistent |
| Marketplace | High trust factor | Safe, credible, professional |
| Internal Tool | Low aesthetic bar | Functional, understandable |

## Budget-to-Design Matrix

| Total MVP Budget | Design Budget | Expectation | Recommended Approach |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| $20K–30K | $1K–2K | Clean, functional | Dev-designed + brief review |
| $30K–50K | $2K–4K | Modern, consistent | Designer for key screens |
| $50K–80K | $4K–8K | Polished experience | Full design process |
| $80K+ | $6K–10K | Premium design | Agency or senior designer |

# Common Founder Mistakes

## "Make it like Apple."

Unrealistic for MVP budgets. Aim for simple, not perfect.

## Designing for yourself.

You know the product; users don't. Test with real users.

## Feature creep through design.

Stick to scope until launch.

## Ignoring developer feedback.

Complex visuals often equal high cost.

## No design system.

Leads to inconsistent UI and higher maintenance.

## Perfectionism.

Two rounds of revisions are usually enough — then ship.

# Final Thoughts

## Launch with clarity over beauty

Design for MVPs is about clarity, usability, and feasibility — not perfection.

A "good enough" design:

→ Works for users

→ Reflects basic brand trust

→ Fits time and budget constraints

→ Can evolve post-launch

Gather real feedback, and iterate based on data — not assumptions.

# Deliverables

### Design Brief Template

Use before hiring designers.

### Designer Evaluation Checklist

Confirm experience, communication, and availability.

### Design Review Framework

Evaluate usability and feasibility.

### Handoff Checklist

Ensure developers have all assets and clarity.