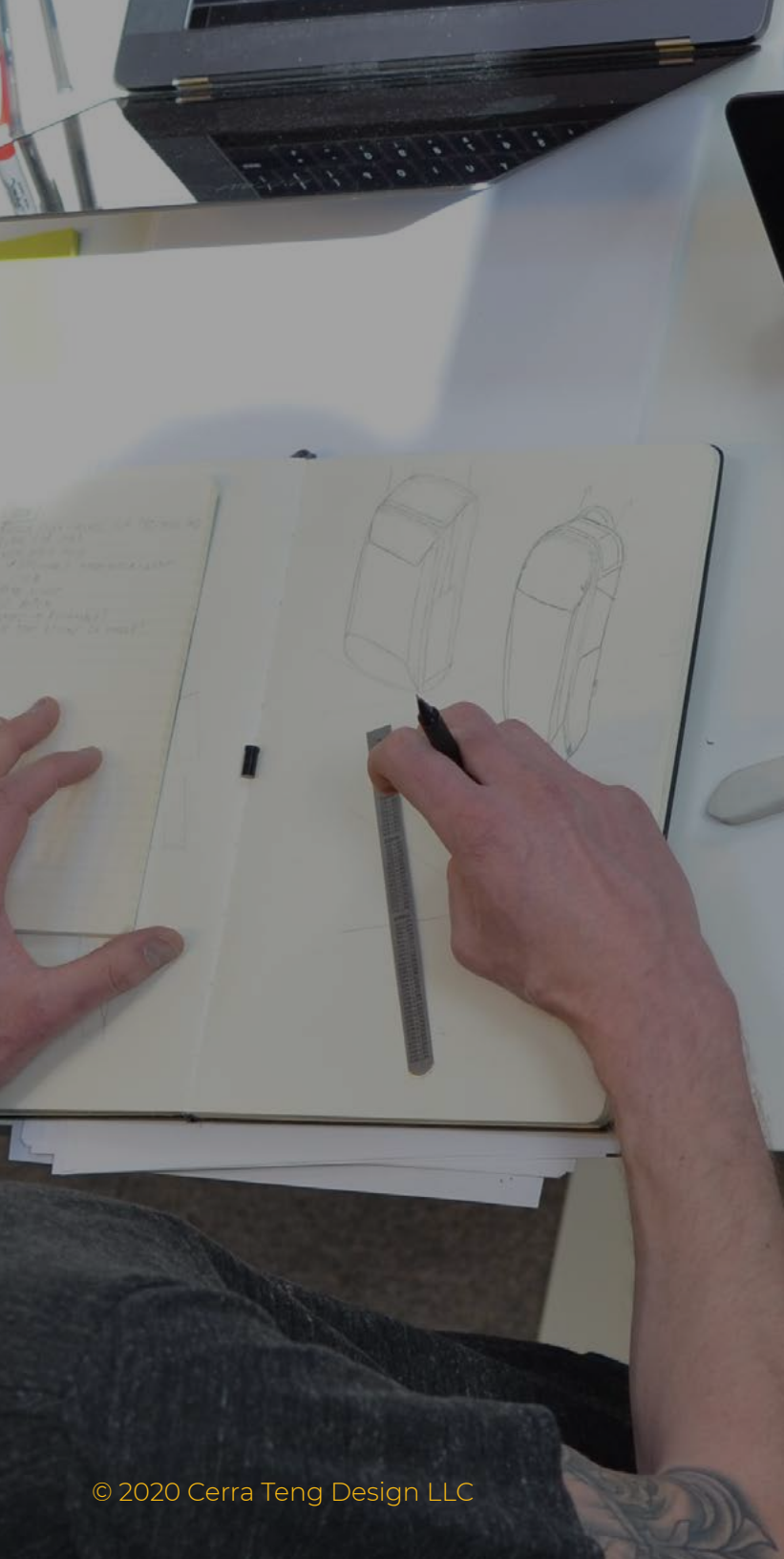




How to

DESIGN YOUR FIRST OUTDOOR PRODUCT

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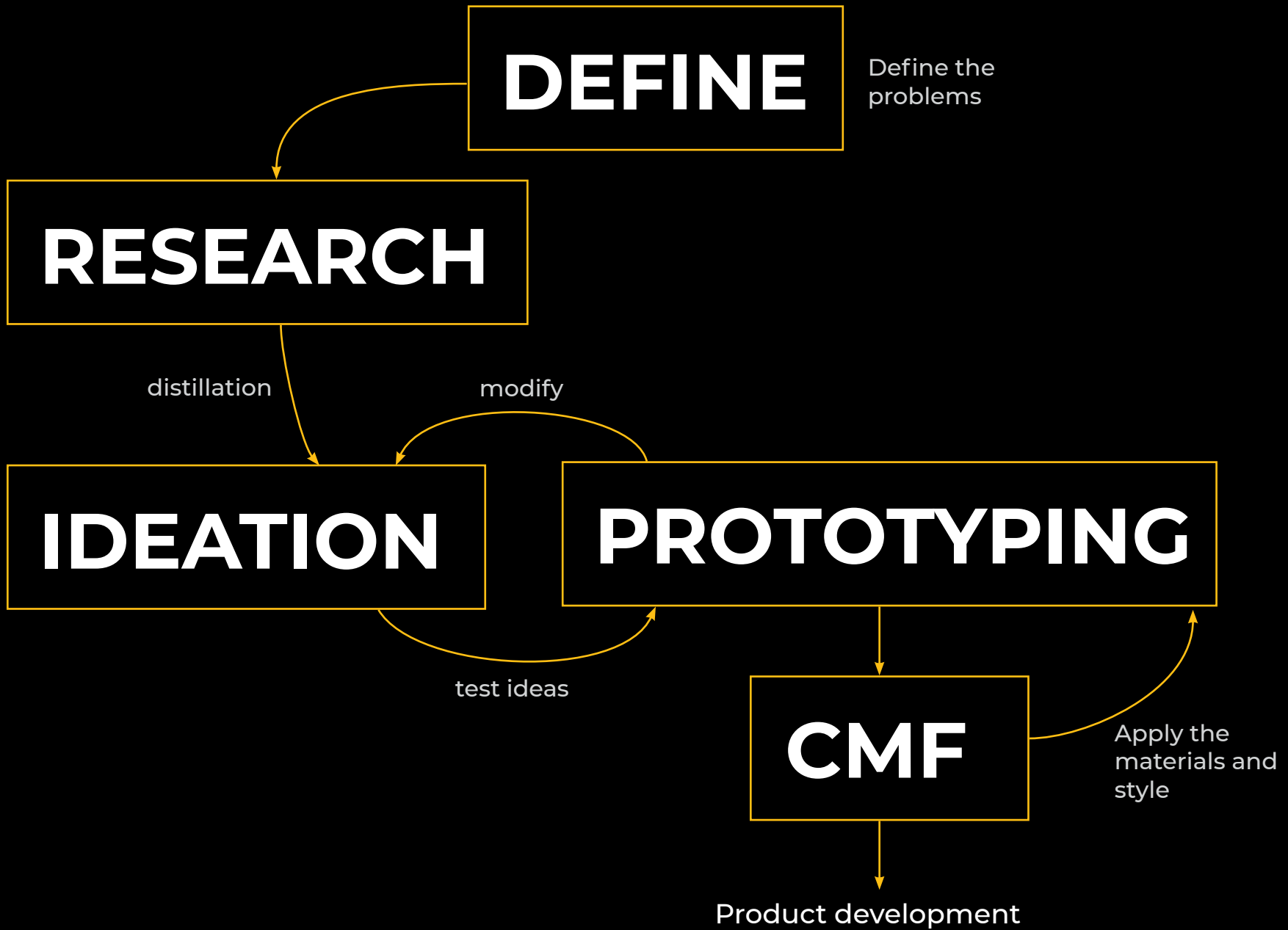


DESIGN FOR USERS

Product design is not an art, it is a science. The design process is a systematic way of bringing your ideas to life. A product designer is not merely a sketcher, they are problem solvers. In major outdoor brands, each step of the process is owned by a different expert. It took me years of schooling and professional experience to fully understand the methodology. It's normal to feel confused or frustrated creating your own brand or product, I'm here to help. cerrateng@gmail.com

Alright, if you're ready, here we go -

Product Design Process



1. DEFINE THE PROBLEMS



What are the current challenges? What are the problems you're trying to solve? *Be aware that you're trying to solve user's problem, not just your own. People only resonate to the products that solve their pain points.*

2. MARKETING RESEARCH

What are the existing solutions in the market? Have the products evolved? How big is the market? Who are your competitors? You can do online research first and go to REI or local shops. It's quite important to see and touch the products yourself.

Your goal in this stage is to understand if your product can be profitable in the current market. By comparing and contrasting existing products you can pin point where your product fits in.



3. UNDERSTAND YOUR USERS

This is where most start ups go wrong, they do not invest in learning about their buyer. Understanding your buyer's values and interest will help you sell to them. There are some different research methods to understand user preferences and behaviors - survey, interview, user focus group study, user journey map, etc. Some approaches bring quantity data; some show in-depth result.

Here's the [example](#) of research we did for Mt. Bachelor rebranding project.

4. DISTILLING INSIGHTS

Analyse the information you gathered from your challenges, market and user research. Connect the dots, group the relevant data, and find out what is the possibly best direction for your product.

5. IDEATION

Think of as many ideas as possible - hundreds! Have fun and relax when you're brainstorming. If you're brainstorming with your team do so without any judgement, negativity can hinder creativity.

Use a huge sheet of paper or white board. If you know how to sketch, great! Draw your ideas! Don't be afraid to be too crazy! If you can't draw, write your ideas on post-it.

6. PROTOTYPING

Select your top 3 most promising ideas to quickly test. You can use cardboard, paper and tape to make small scale samples of your idea. It's not about how it looks; it's about how it works. If it doesn't work, go back to your ideas and pick others to test. Repeat and modify it until it works.

If you're working on hardgoods, 3D modeling and 3D printing is great for rapid prototyping.



First round of prototyping is quick and dirty! It might look funny but the point is proving if it works!



Prototype the most important features of your product until it works.



As time goes, the mockup will get closer and closer to the finished product.

7. COLOR, MATERIALS AND FINISH

It's time to apply the style. Keep in mind that the colors and materials on your product will affect how users view your brand. It's worth investing time to do some trend research and map out the color spectrum.

The next step is creating a *tech pack*. A tech pack can be thought of as an architecture map that specifies the colors, materials, pattern, instructions on how it's constructed and more, it gets sent to manufacturers. This part of the design process falls into Product Development which is a topic we'll cover in another pdf.

Is that helpful?

Schedule your FREE consultation to ask any questions about your brand or product:

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About the author

Cerra Teng is a design strategist that helps outdoor companies increase their audience by integrating marketing, branding, storytelling and design. She holds a B.S. in product design from ArtCenter College of Design. She has designed softgoods for brands such as Carhartt, MHM and Puffin.

She is addicted to rock climbing and snowboarding. She also loves drawing her life on her [Instagram](#).

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