

Photo journal

A Photo journal is a straightforward and very visual way to get a glimpse into how a person lives his or her life and also helps empower individuals to tell their own stories. With just a simple prompt and a few instructions, you can get a view into someone's life that you simply couldn't get on your own. We use this method to go beyond an in-person Interview to better understand a person's context, the people who surround them, community dynamics, and the journey through how they use a product or service. Photo journals can help create a foundation for richer discussion as they prime an individual before an Interview which means they start thinking about the subject a few days in advance.

STEPS

1. This method can take a couple days to come to life, so make sure that you've allocated enough time in advance of a scheduled Interview to make it work. The goal is to capture everyday moments and dynamics.
2. Give the person you're designing for a camera (if they don't have one) and a prompt. If you're designing a financial service, you might ask the person to take pictures of everyone who influences their financial decisions. Or you could ask them to take a picture of all the places where they handle finances.
3. Once the person you're designing for has taken the photos, get them developed, or have them send it to you digitally in advance of the scheduled interview.
4. Photo journals allow you to actually preview a piece of your Interview, so spend some time with the pictures and develop a few questions you'll want to ask based on what you see.
5. When you're together, ask the person to walk you through the photos they took, and what they mean. Probe into the "why" behind each photo, dig into how they feel about the photos, and don't forget to ask what they decided to leave out and why.