

Collaboration Model for PM & Design

1. Communication Foundations (from Emoji Charades)

- **Shared Learning Styles:** Start projects by identifying preferred communication modes (visual mockups, written docs, live discussions). Use this knowledge to adapt how PMs frame requirements and how Designers present explorations.
- **Structured Channels:**
 - **Slack** → **Quick Updates / async clarifications**
 - **Docs** → **Larger project direction, requirements, and stakeholder alignment**
 - **Live Meetings** → **Strategic alignment, feedback loops**
- **Clarity Check-ins:** Incorporate “say-back moments” where the recipient summarizes what they understood (e.g., PM explains design intent back, or Design restates requirements).

2. Alignment Practices (from Emoji Charades)

- **Pre-Stakeholder Syncs:** PM + Design align first on scope, goals, and key decisions before meetings with execs. This prevents confusion and ensures a united front.
- **Single Source of Truth:** Define where requirements and design decisions are captured (e.g., PRD + Design Doc in the same workspace) to reduce Slack noise.
- **Clear Direction:** PM provides *why* + *constraints*, Design explores the *how*. Each side acknowledges understanding before moving forward.

3. Creativity with Structure (from Crazy 8s)

- **Framing Brainstorms:** Every session starts with an explicit statement of **scope, objective, and purpose**. PMs provide boundaries (goals, constraints, metrics), while Designers open up possibilities within them.
- **Balanced Idea Seeding:** Idea seeds are framed with enough clarity to avoid tangents but leave room for interpretation. For example:
 - *Too vague:* “Reimagine onboarding.”
 - *Better seed:* “Redesign onboarding with the goal of reducing drop-off after step 2 by 15%.”
- **“Yes, And” Culture:** Encourage additive building on each other’s ideas, but also instill **permission to stop** — not every tangent deserves exploration.

4. Collaboration Cadence

- **Bi-Weekly Alignment:** PM + Design review upcoming priorities, open questions, and stakeholder needs.

- **Brainstorm Rituals:** Use fast-iteration formats (like Crazy 8s) but always close with *decision-making criteria* and *next steps*.
- **Decision Logs:** Document why a direction was chosen (helps onboard others, avoid rehashing).
- **Retrospectives:** After milestones, reflect on what worked/didn't in PM–Design collab (continuous improvement loop).

5. Guiding Principles

1. **Clarity before Creativity** — scope and objectives must be clear before ideation.
2. **Alignment before Stakeholders** — PM + Design presents a unified story.
3. **Focus on Outcomes, not Just Ideas** — tie brainstorming and design iterations to measurable goals.
4. **Permission to Pause** — know when an idea has reached its limit.
5. **Document & Share** — reduce reliance on Slack threads for key project decisions.