



# How to Hackathon

This guide will help you get the most out of your hackathon experience.





## Get in the mindset and find your fun

- Leave your studies at the door - this is a rare opportunity to get out of the daily grind and do something different.
- Come with a can-do attitude - it's gonna be fast paced, less structured and you'll get exposed to new ways of thinking and working.
- Be flexible and don't get too attached to your ideas - you will have to prioritise and cut corners - it's all about impact over perfection.
- The difficult parts are the fun parts - make the most of it 😊



*"I loved the hackathon and I'm itching to be engaged with more!"*

[Loyiso Mlandu](#) | Developer at [Converganc3](#)



*"The guided approach with time limits helped keep the ideation session engaging and productive"*

[Rebecca Lain](#) | Solution Engineer at [Root](#)



## Win with your team

- Get to know each other better, figure out your skill sets and how to use them to your advantage.
- Everyone has a role to play - even if you're not technical. You can help your team to understand the customer problem, create awesome designs for your solutions, ensure a world class user journey and figure out AI prompts to help you win.
- Collaborate by pair coding to get faster results - you can use Replit to work on the same code base.
- Keep communication open - speak up as soon as you are stuck to get extra eyes.
- Take breaks to have a coffee and grab a snack - keep your 🧠 fueled.





## Time is the most important factor

- Time will drive your decision making in every way.
- Pick a dedicated time-keeper who can help you stay on track - check-in every hour to share learnings and see your progress.
- Keep an eye on scope creep: focus on the critical details and features to make sure you have a working POC at the end. Constantly ask yourself how you can simplify your solution.
- Timebox yourself so you don't go down rabbit holes! Try to get a sense of how long you think your POC should take and when you are half way through the time make sure you are halfway through the build. If not, figure out what needs to change to get you there quickly.



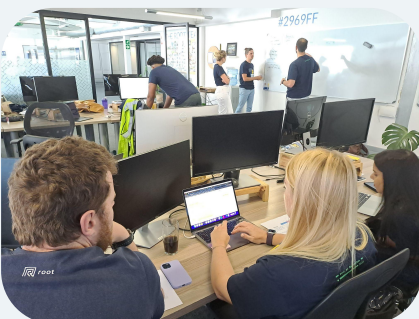
*“The event was wonderful. There was ample information that was well structured, it was great to have access to so many resources and mentors. Everyone was accessible, and proactive. Lovely time”*

[Collins Zimba](#), Senior dev at [Smoke Customer Intelligence](#)



## Build your best solution

- Derisk your project at the start by tackling the parts you understand the least first.
- Continuously integrate and test your work frequently to help avoid last-minute surprises.
- Get the mentors and subject matter experts involved - their insights can save you time and steer your project in the right direction.
- Work fast: use ChatGPT as a team member to help you come up with ideas, write code for you and sanity check your thinking.
- If something feels too hard, it probably is - find a simpler way to do it.
- Don't waste time on things that don't matter like sign-in screens.





## Perfecting your pitch

- Tell a compelling story and clearly articulate the problem you're solving, your solution, and its potential impact. Make it relatable. Think about the level of detail that you want to know about the other solutions.
- A live demo can be powerful. Ensure it's well-rehearsed to avoid technical hiccups. [Have a backup recording just in case the demo gods don't play nice]
- You need to practice your presentation and time yourself to stay concise, clear, and compelling.
- Use the [template slides](#) for your presentation to make sure you have all the right information and the mentors will do dry runs with you.



*"Thanks for guiding us through the experience. I can't quite believe how productive the hack was!"*

[Charlotte Koep](#) | COO at [Root](#)



## Make the most of your learnings

- Reflect on what you learned, what you would do differently next time, and how you can apply these insights in your day to day work.

