
Grace's Work Experience Week: Sport and Design Project

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Supervisor: Doug Belshaw (Dad)

Dates: First week of June 2026

Location: Home office

This is a four-day mini studio project rather than shadowing someone at a job. The point is to make something real, and to pick up how a small business actually thinks before it builds.

What the week is for

Across four days you'll get a feel for what running a small, values-led business actually involves. The week is about two things at once: making something tangible, and learning that good design starts by finding the right problem to solve. Jumping straight to ideas is the most common rookie mistake in product work. So you'll brainstorm widely on Day 1 before choosing what to focus on, build it across Days 2 and 3, then test the business case on Day 4.

What you'll make

You decide the shape of your project on Day 1 and Day 2. The process starts with finding a real problem worth solving for a specific group of people, then designing something for them. The hero output of the week is whatever that "something" turns out to be. Everything else (the brand, the business summary, any extra graphics) supports it.

Some possible directions, just to get the imagination going: a parent pack for a youth football club; a session journal for young players; a set of training cards for coaches; a mock-up of an app that helps with team communication; a printed booklet for new players joining a club; a tool that helps a club secretary handle admin. None of these is the answer. The answer is whatever fits the problem you choose.

Outputs

Hero output

- The main artefact you've chosen to make, designed for the specific person you identified on Day 1.

Supporting outputs

- A name and visual identity for whatever you've made: logo, two or three colours, simple type choices.
- A one-page business summary explaining who it's for, what problem it solves, and how it might work as a small venture.

Stretch outputs (if there's time)

- A flyer, poster, or social media graphic.
- A second version of the hero output, refined after feedback.

What you'll learn

By the end of the week you should be able to:

- Run a customer brainstorm: take a rough area of interest and surface specific jobs, pains, and gains for different people in it.
- Explain the basic parts of a small business: audience, offer, costs, and possible income.
- Make and improve a finished design artefact based on feedback, the way real designers work.
- Present and defend your design and pricing decisions to a real audience.
- Reflect on what the week has taught you about your strengths, your interests, and how work actually works.

What you'll need

Have this ready before Monday:

- A laptop with a free design tool installed (Canva, Figma, or an Affinity Designer trial).
- A sketchbook and pens for early ideas.
- Your phone for reference photos and quick mock-ups.
- A printed copy of the value proposition canvas. I'll print one for you, and I'll also lend you Value Proposition Design (the book it comes from) if you want to skim a chapter or two beforehand.

Daily outline

Day 1: Customers, pains, and gains

Day one is the part of product design that most people skip: figuring out who you might be designing for, and what they actually need. You'll brainstorm widely. Pick a few possible groups of people from areas you know (girls in youth football, parents managing team logistics, coaches running sessions, club secretaries handling admin) and explore three things for each: their jobs (what they're trying to get done), their pains (what's frustrating, blocking, or annoying), and their gains (what would feel like a win). This is the customer-profile half of the value proposition canvas, which comes from the book Value Proposition Design. By the end of the day you'll have chosen one customer and one specific problem to focus on. The pace today is deliberately gentle, so we can get the rhythm of the week right before hitting the design days.

Day 2: Value map and brand direction

Morning is value-map work: given the customer you chose yesterday, what could you make that relieves their pains and creates gains for them? Sketch three or four loose options (it might be an

app, a printed pack, a service, a website, a piece of kit) and pick one to take forward. The afternoon runs like a Design & Technology studio session: gather visual inspiration, draft a shortlist of names, and land on a single brand direction (two or three colours, one or two type choices, a rough logo concept). One direction you're happy with, not three options to pick between.

Day 3: Make the hero output

This is the big day, where the main thing gets built. You'll apply the brand direction from Day 2 across whatever you chose to make. If it's a parent pack, build the pack. If it's an app concept, build a short mock-up document showing key screens and how it works. If it's a set of session cards, design the cards. Make every choice with one specific reader or user in mind: the person you identified on Day 1. Marketing, trust, and audience communication aren't abstract topics; they show up directly in the artefact itself.

Day 4: Feasibility, presentation, and reflection

The morning is for business realism. How many people might realistically use this? What could it charge, or how else might it be funded? What costs and responsibilities come with running it? What would adult involvement need to look like, especially around safeguarding if minors are involved? In the afternoon you'll do a fifteen-minute show-and-tell: present your value proposition (the customer, their pains and gains, what you made, and why it fits) to a family member or trusted friend of mine, in person or by video call, and defend your design and pricing decisions. The week closes with a short written reflection.

Example schedule

The schedule below is a working pattern, not a fixed timetable. Day one allows more slack at the start so we can calibrate the pace before the design days.

Time	Activity
09:30–10:00	Check in and plan the day
10:00–11:15	Main learning block: research, audience, or business thinking
11:15–11:30	Break
11:30–12:45	Design and prototyping block
12:45–13:45	Lunch
13:45–15:00	Independent work (I'll be around for questions)
15:00–15:15	Break
15:15–16:00	Review, reflect, plan tomorrow

It keeps a balance of structure, independent work, and reflection across each day.

How we'll work together

I'll be around throughout the week and on hand for questions, feedback, and reviews. This is a home-based project rather than a job, with no client work and no contact with people we don't know. The day-four show-and-tell will be with a family member or someone I trust, not an external audience.