GOALS / SUCCESS SPECTRUM

Getting clear and aligned about goals is a critical practice for any project, big or small. All too often, groups don't take the first step of articulating their goals up-front. Even more often, groups are not specific enough about what success or failure looks like. As a result, groups move forward thinking they have alignment, only to find out later that they don't.

The Goals / Success Spectrum is a toolkit designed to help you get very clear about goals and outcomes. It defines success along a spectrum—from minimum to target to epic—which gives you a much more nuanced and specific sense of what you're trying to accomplish as well as different scenarios for success and failure.

USING THE SPECTRUM

Start by naming your high-level **GOALS** — what you'd like to accomplish and why.

Brainstorm on stickies different scenarios for what success looks like. Be as specific as possible. If you previously used the Strategy / Culture Bicycle and already have stickies defining different success scenarios, you may re-use those stickies.

Put the stickies in the appropriate column: Minimum, Target, and Epic.

- **MINIMUM:** These are the minimum things that must happen in order to call a project successful. These scenarios should almost certainly happen if the group does its work diligently.

- **TARGET:** These are the things you're hoping will happen. They should be hard, but attainable. They should have a 40 to 70 percent likelihood of happening if the group does its work diligently.

- **EPIC:** This is what success beyond your wildest imagination looks like. Fill this column in twice, as everybody usually self-censors themselves the first time around. Don't be shy! These are not your target scenarios, but it's nice to envision what you really care about.

Brainstorm on stickies different scenarios for failure, and place them in the **FAILURE** column. Be as specific as possible.

Identify the discrepancies on the poster — the same success scenario in different columns, or a minimum success scenario that is more lenient than a failure scenario. Discuss these discrepancies with the group, and adjust accordingly.

Once there are no longer any discrepancies on the poster, do a gut check. Are the success scenarios too hard or too soft? Are these truly the scenarios that matter most? Is there anything missing? If necessary, either reframe the goals or re-adjust the different success scenarios.

HISTORY AND CREDITS

Eugene Eric Kim and Amy Wu (Duende) created this toolkit. The idea of defining success along a spectrum was inspired by Kristin Cobble. The idea of explicitly incorporating failure scenarios was inspired by Seb Paquet, who also named the "Epic" column.